

J U N E 2 0 0 3

PRICE: HK\$38

China

C H I N A T O U R I S M



HISTORICAL TOUR ACROSS GANSU, QINGHAI, & SHAANXI

MYSTERIOUS GUZANG FESTIVAL
IN GUIZHOU
LEGENDARY BLACK CITY

275

ISSN 1025-577X



9 771025 577006

HK\$38 / S\$8.35 (with GST) / US\$6.95 / CAN\$8.95

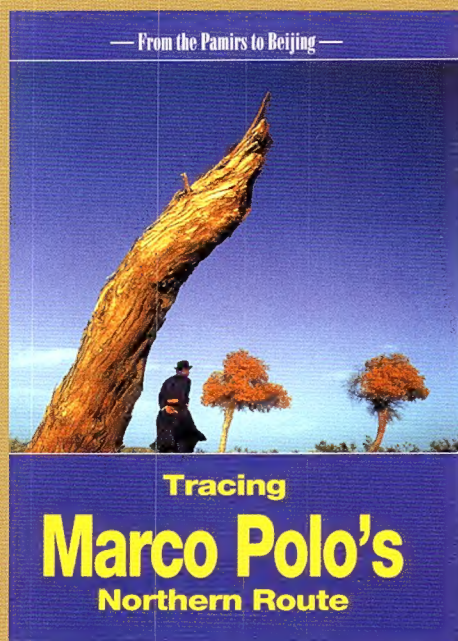
Photographic & Practical Guides for Your China Tours

Before you set off for your perfect journey, you may have to prepare your itinerary carefully. Each of the following recommended readings offers different types of information which cater to our readers' various interests: exploring, photography, or tourist information. They will be great guides to your China tours.

Tracing Marco Polo's Northern Route

A record of an 80-day journey in which our authors drive their jeep 12,000 km long through the northern regions of China following in the footsteps of Marco Polo's historic journey from the Pamir Highland to Beijing. In a medley of images and words, we present you with the fascinating scenery and various ways of life in Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet.

HK\$156

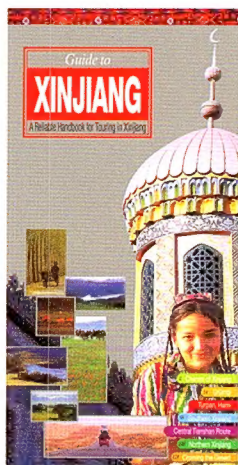
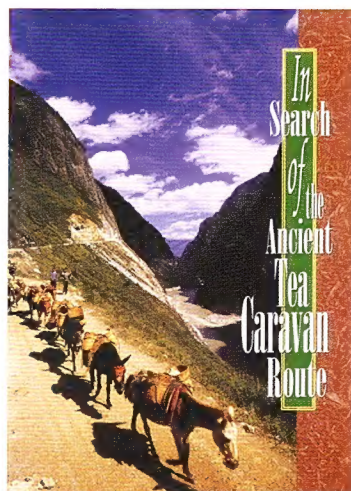


In Search of the Ancient Tea Caravan Route

The ancient Tea Caravan Route can be traced back to 2,000 years ago, starting from Xishuangbanna at China's southwestern end, passing through boundless forests and valleys to the Sino-Indian, Nepalese and Sikkimese borders on Tibet, the "Roof of the World".

This book is not-to-be-missed by every daring adventurer.

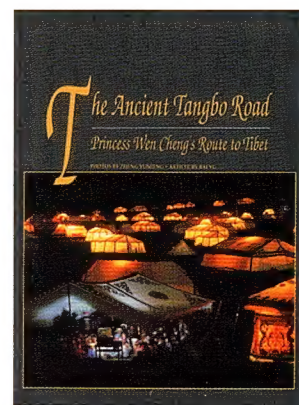
HK\$192



Guide to Xinjiang

This book is especially designated for DIY travellers who desire to explore the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. There are detailed introduction to scenic spots in five main areas in Xinjiang including Ürümqi, Turpan, Southern and Northern Xinjiang, and Central Tianshan. Practical tourist information on accommodation, ticketing, shopping, local specialty, as well as travel tips are covered.

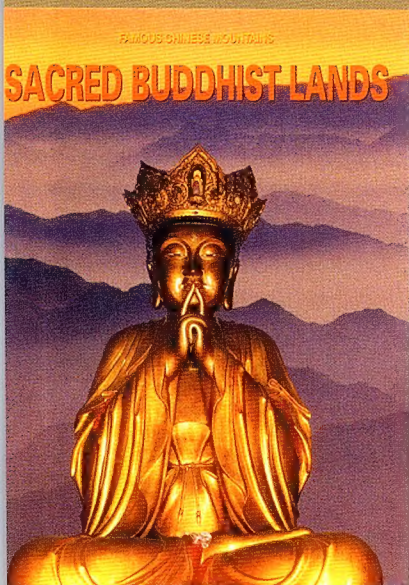
HK\$96



The Ancient Tangbo Road

Covering four provinces including Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, and the Tibet Autonomous Region, the ancient Tangbo Road was created on the map when Princess Wen Cheng was sent as a bride to Luoxie (present-day Lhasa) during the Tang Dynasty. Our photographers and writers, who have followed this arduous route, present you the graceful sights and unique ethnic customs on the way.

HK\$192



Sacred Buddhist Lands

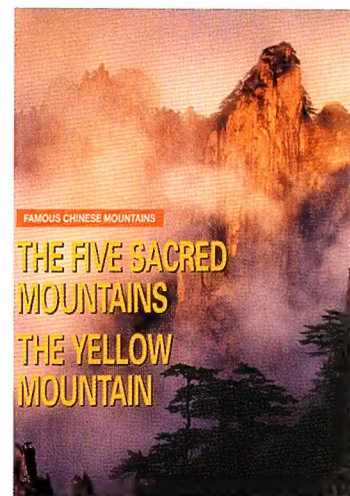
Buddhism in China is inevitably linked with some of the country's best known mountains. And going deep in the mountains and far away from civilization is an ideal place for retreat. Belonging to the four Bodhisattvas respectively, the four most famous Buddhist mountains — Wutai, Jiuhua, Putuo and Emei — are nestled with numerous monasteries and nunneries which have been worshipped by pilgrims for thousands of years. Tourists to these places will totally be soaked in "Kingdoms of Buddhism".

HK\$156

The Five Sacred Mountains The Yellow Mountain

Located in five provinces in China, every of the Five Sacred Mountains — Taishan, Hengshan, Songshan, Hengshan and Huashan — has its magnificent natural and cultural landscapes. Besides, Huangshan (Yellow Mountain), is also famous for its spectacular rocks, pine trees, and sea of clouds. It will be a great enjoyment in reading both the detailed text and remarkable images by our experienced photographers as recorded in this book.

HK\$156



Subscriber's information

Name: (Mr./Ms./Mrs.) _____ Daytime contact no.: _____

Address: _____

Fax/E-mail: _____

Order information

Title	Price	Postage	Qty
The Five Sacred Mountains /The Yellow Mountain	HK \$156/US \$20	Local HK \$10/US \$1 per copy Overseas surface mail HK \$38/ US \$5 per copy	
Sacred Buddhist Lands	HK \$156/US \$20		
The Ancient Tangbo Road	HK \$192/US \$25		
In Search of the Ancient Tea Caravan Route	HK \$192/US \$25		
Guide to Xinjiang	HK \$96/US \$12		
Tracing Marco Polo's Northern Route	HK \$156/US \$20		

Payment Methods

☐ Check that payable to HONG KONG CHINA TOURISM PRESS or;
(additional US \$7 will be levied for US check or bank draft)

☐ Credit card ☐ VISA ☐ MASTER ☐ AE

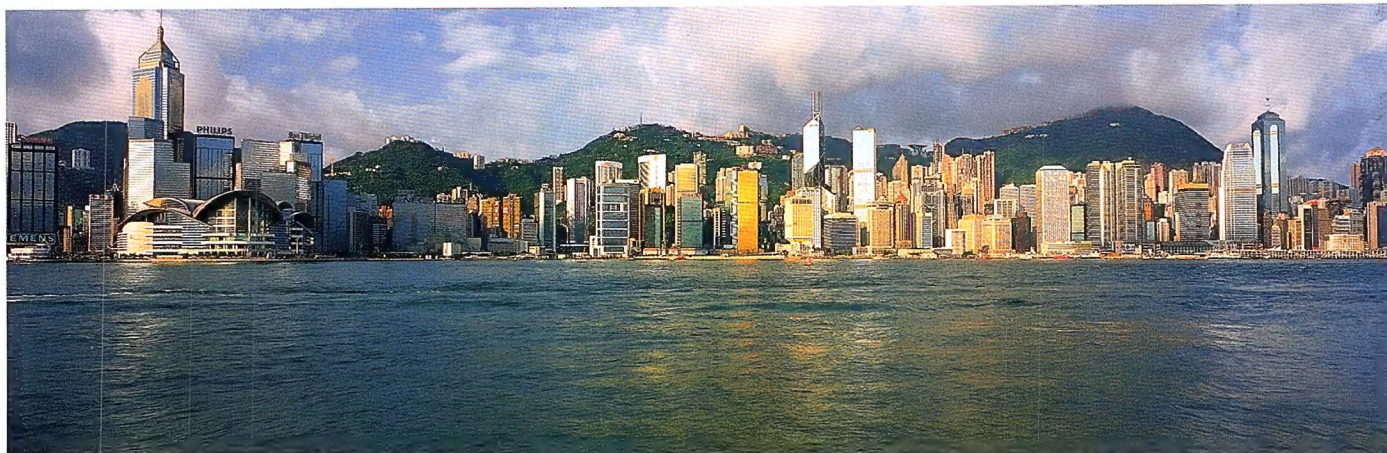
Card number: _____ Expiry date: _____

Name of cardholder: _____

Signature: _____ Total amount: _____

Return to:

Subscription Department, 24/F Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong. Or fax to (852) 2561-8196.

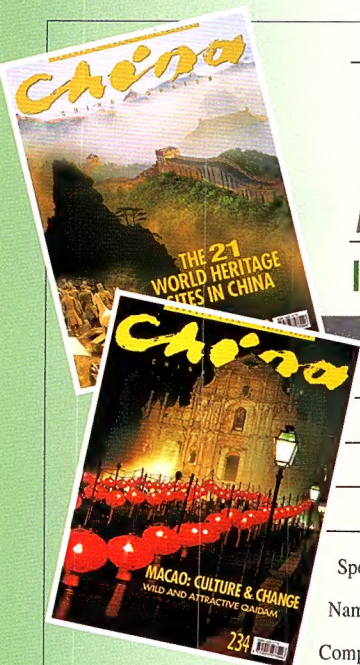


TOP SERVICE
TO BUSINESS TRAVELLERS
AND TOURISTS ALIKE

Services include:

- * Worldwide hotel reservations
- * International flight bookings
- * Hotel packages
- * Organised tours of China, Asia, the United States, Canada and Europe
- * Cruises and holiday packages
- * Car rental service
- * Launch rental service
- * Eurail pass
- * Visa service

Service Hotline: **2516 9228** (Bonnie Lik) Fax: **2563 7994** E-mail: travel@hkctp.com.hk



ADVERTISEMENT ENQUIRIES

I am interested in advertising with **CHINA TOURISM** (Please complete in block letters):

Advertiser's Name	Product(s)	Issue No. / Page No.

Special Requests: ☐ Quotation ☐ Sample ☐ Others (please specify) _____

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms): _____ Position: _____

Company Name: _____

Company Address: _____

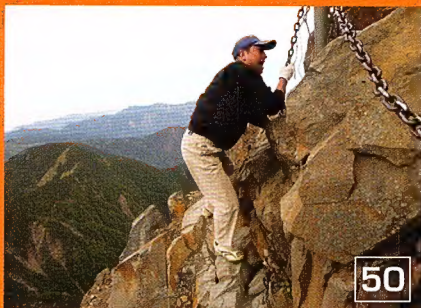
Major Type of Business (please specify): _____

(tick one): ☐ Import ☐ Export ☐ Wholesale ☐ Retail ☐ Agent ☐ Manufacturing

Signature: _____ Business Tel: _____ Fax: _____



40



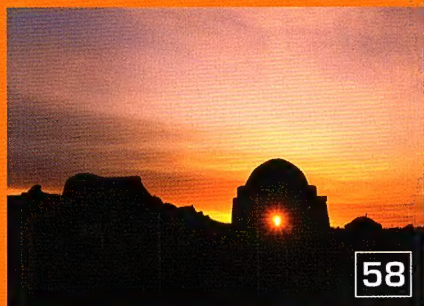
50

China
CHINA TOURISM

No. 275 June 2003



54



58

7 From the Editor

8 Update

10 Travel Notes

13 Calendar

14 Feature Story

Travelling in the Footsteps of Sui Dynasty Emperor Yang

Photos & article by Shi Baoxiu

Inspired by an ancient poet who had travelled to the wild Northwest of China, our correspondent leads our readers to a multi-province journey across Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi provinces. Following in the footsteps of the second emperor of the Sui Dynasty (581—618), we are on a rather remote tourist route which was actually part of the Silk Road in ancient times. The delicate scenery and historical relics seen on the way will definitely bring an in-depth taste for your travel experience in China.



14

40 Discoveries

Guzang Festival of the Miao — The Mysteries of an Ancient Sacrificial Ceremony

Photos by Lu Xianyi Article by Zhang Xiaosong

The Guzang (Bull Slaughtering) Festival is only held in villages of the Miao ethnicity in Guizhou Province every 13 years. Our correspondent visits to one of the villages, Jiaqu, located deep within the Moon Mountain southeast of the province, and reports detailed, breathtaking processes of the 15-day Guzang Festival.

50 Landscapes

Climbing the Highest Peak in Northeast Asia: Taiwan's Yushan Mountains

Photos by Zhu Jianhui, He Yanguang Article by Zhu Jianhui

54 Photography

Snapping the Red-Crowned Cranes

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin

58 On the Way

Tales of Heicheng

Photos & article by Huang Yanhong

From the perspective of the writer, Heicheng (Black City), located in Inner Mongolia's westernmost part — Ejin Banner, is an extremely rare example of an old castle which can sparkle with poetic inspiration in history. Today, the once-dead city has though attracted endless flow of scholars, photo buffs, and tourists.

june
contents

English Edition

China

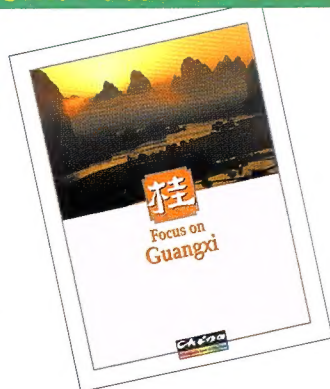
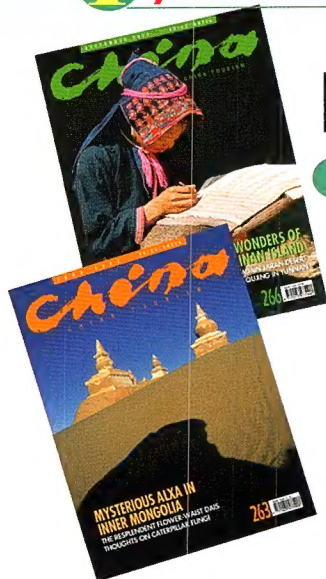
C H I N A T O U R I S M

SAVE OFF THE NEWSSTAND PRICE

1 year subscription (12 issues)

HK \$296

Gift: Focus on Guangxi



2 years subscription (24 issues)

HK \$540

Gift: China's 23 World Heritage Sites



Overseas Subscription Rates

Region	Surface Mail		Air Mail	
	1 year	2 years	1 year	2 years
PRC, Macao and Taiwan	HK\$451/US\$58	HK\$850/US\$109	HK\$690/US\$89	HK\$1328/US\$171
Asian countries (except Japan)	US\$69	US\$130	US\$89	US\$171
Japan and non-Asian countries	US\$70	US\$133	US\$102	US\$197

☐ Additional charge for Registered Mail HK\$156/US\$20 per year.

☐ Additional charge for US cheque US \$7

I would like to subscribe to CHINA TOURISM starting from _____/20____ for _____ (Month)

☐ 1year, please send me Focus on Guangxi

☐ 2year, please send me China's 23 World Heritage Sites

Subscriber's Information

Surname: (Mr/Mrs/Ms) _____ Tel: _____

Fax/E-mail: _____ Country: _____

Address: _____

Method of Payment

Total payment: HK\$ _____/US\$ _____

☐ Cheque enclosed made payable to "HONG KONG CHINA TOURISM PRESS"

☐ Please debit my credit card ☐ VISA ☐ MASTER ☐ AE

Card no.: _____ Expiry date: _____

Signature: _____

Please return to : HONG KONG CHINA TOURISM PRESS (Circulation Department), 24/F Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2561 8001 Fax: (852) 2561 8196



65 Travel Gear

The Shutterbug's Stuff

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin

66 Highlights

Sunshine City — Changchun

Edited by Kristy Wong, Zuo Jun

Changchun is a beautiful city lying on the Songliao plains of Northeast China's Jilin Province. Its centre for politics, economy, science, technology, culture, and transport as well as reputation as "Forest City", "Auto City", and "Movie City" have won it the name of "Sunshine City".

72 Profile

Chua Lam: A Man who Enjoys Life

Photos & article by Huang Yanhong



Miao women catching fishes
(by Lu Xianyi)



76 Culinary Delights

Lotus Banquet in Sanshui: Eating with Fairies on the Water

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin

78 Customs

Horses Riding Across the Sky

Photos & article by Zhu Lin

80 Traveller's Corner

The Lost History of Qinghai Lake

Photos & article by Mehdi Chebil Link

82 Traveller's Corner

Star Struck on Star Lake

Photos & article by Tony Henderson

86 Executive's Memo

88 Next Issue





Consultants (In alphabetical order)

Director

Vice Director & Editor-in-Chief

General Manager

Deputy General Managers

Executive Editor-in-Chief

Deputy Editors-in-Chief

Director of Editorial Department

Deputy Directors of Editorial Department

Editors of English Editorial Department

Director of Art Department

Designers

Assistant Designer

Advertising Manager

China Account Managers

Manager of Sales & Marketing Department

Business Development Manager

Director of Accounts & Administration Dept.

T. K. Ann, Ian Fok Chun Wan, Lam Chun,

Ma Chi Man, Ma Lin, Wong Tak Hoi,

James T. Wu, Howard Young

Tchan Fou-li

Wang Miao

Liu Yang

Kathy Wong, James Jiang, Connie Lee

Ma Yiu Chun

Tu Nai Hsien, Chan Yat Nin

Dianna Lau

Xie Guanghui, Huang Yanhong

Zuo Jun, Kristy Wong

Norris Tong

Y. Y. Lau, W. Y. Yuen, M. Y. Li, S. Y. Leung

Lily Lam

Kent Lai

Yu Xifan, Tung Wai Ning

Connie Lee (concurrent)

James Jiang (concurrent)

Kathy Wong (concurrent)

Publisher: HK CHINA TOURISM PRESS

24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2561 8001 Fax: (852) 2561 8057/ 2561 8196

Editorial Dept., Business Dept., Advertising Dept., Sales Dept. Tel: (852) 2561 8001

China Tourism Photo Library Tel: (852) 2561 8001

E-mail: English Editorial Dept: edit-e@hkctp.com.hk

Advertising Dept: ad@hkctp.com.hk

Sales & Marketing Dept: mktg@hkctp.com.hk

Photo Library: plchinat@netvigator.com

Hong Kong China Tourism Ltd. (Licence No. 351850) Tel: (852) 2516 9228

Printer: C & C Offset Printing Co. Ltd.

C & C Building, 36 Ting Lai Road, Tai Po, N.T. Tel: (852) 2666 4988

Agencies: Australia Gordon and Gotch Ltd., • Belgium Sun Wah Supermarket
• Brazil Comercio Impotdora Konmin Ltd. • Canada Sun Wa Bookstore,
Toronto; Van China Trade Centre Ltd., Vancouver • China National Publications
Import & Export Corp., Beijing • England Guanghua Company Ltd., London •
France Europasie S.A.R.L., Paris • Holland Ming Ya, Amsterdam • Hong Kong
Foreign Press Distributors Ltd. • Japan Koyosha Co. Ltd., Tokyo • Macau
Starlight Bookstore Ltd.; The World Book Company; Plaza Cultural Macau Ltd. •
Malaysia Pustaka Lively, Tawau, Sabah • Singapore Marketasia Distributors (S)
Pte. Ltd. (65) 6744 8483 • Thailand Chew Hong Service Ltd., Bangkok • The
Philippines Good Quality Merchandising, Manila • U.S.A. China Periodical
Distribution, Los Angeles; Oriental Culture Enterprise Co., New York; China
Daily Distribution Corp., New York

China Tourism monthly magazine is available on the scheduled flights, and at
VIP lounges, guest rooms and counters of the following organisations:

 CATHAY PACIFIC



 AIR MACAU
澳門航空

 中華航空
CHINA AIRLINES

 EVA AIR
長榮航空

 復興航空
TransAsia Airways

 UNITED
AIRLINES

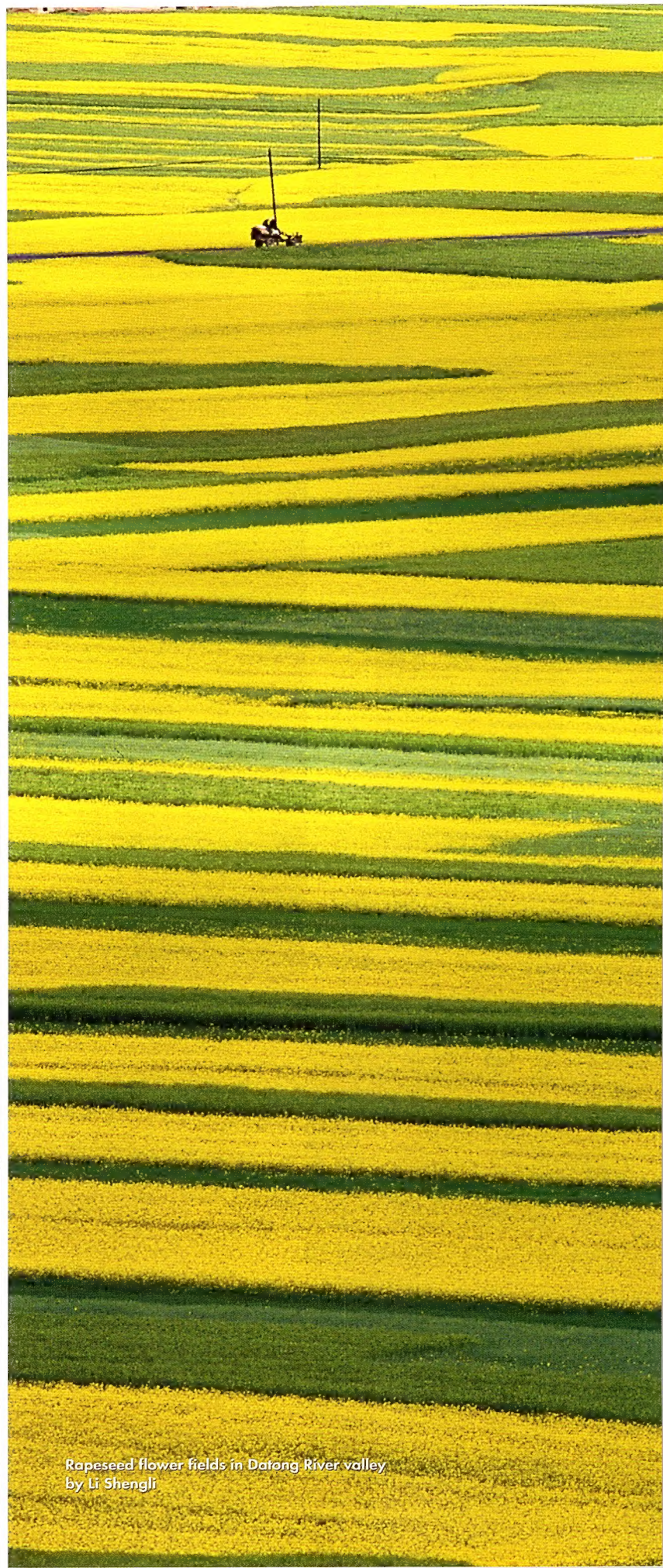
 中國國際航空公司
AIR CHINA

China Advertising License: ICAD006

News-stand price: HK\$38

Printed in Hong Kong

Copyright reserved



Rapeseed flower fields in Datong River valley
by Li Shengli



FROM THE EDITOR

Unending History

These are troubling times for travellers. War in the Middle East and the fear of SARS both at home and abroad have seen a drop in the number of travellers to many famous destinations. These events — history in the making — have deterred many from taking those trips of discovery, away from the drudgery of daily life, that challenge our perceptions of our place in the world and in history.

It is easy to become fearful, but as this issue shows, China has suffered more momentous upheavals and survived. And it will continue to do so. Dynasties have come and gone, along with the towns and fortresses that symbolized their wealth and power. Take Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty. Our correspondent tells how Yang set out on an expedition of conquest at the head of 400,000 troops in the year 609. No doubt the mighty emperor thought he was creating a dynasty that would last all time, as did his enemies, the Tughun, who established the first and only kingdom on the Qinghai Plateau. The Sui and the Tughun are now long gone, but their legacies remain in the ancient towns and associated legends and traditions that mark Emperor Yang's journey. The vicissitudes of history — the troubled times of the past — are also well illustrated in the story of Heicheng, the long-dead fortress city on the edge of the Gobi Desert where ghosts still stalk the ruins.

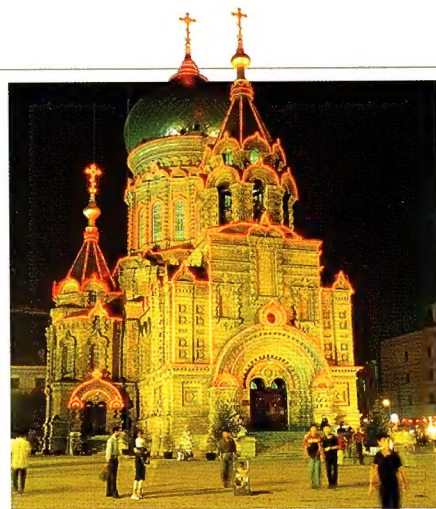
But that is the past. Today, the Miao people in Guizhou still worship their ancestors, as they have done for centuries, celebrating life. And Hong Kong writer Choi Lan, with his lust for food, art and travel, shows us there is still so much to enjoy from the past and the present.

China, new and old, survives — and will continue to do so.

European-style Buildings in Harbin to be Refurbished

A group of European-style buildings sitting in an area of 10,000 square metres around the Central Boulevard in Harbin, capital of Northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, will be refurbished this year in a major facelift of the city's busiest commercial district. They were built by people from Russia, Germany, France, Britain and Italy in the early 1900s.

These antique structures are a record of life in Harbin a century ago, and the facelift will feature the mixture of Chinese and Western cultures these buildings reflect. To return the area to its original look, some 213 households and 31 business premises will be relocated and buildings constructed without licenses will be demolished. Upon completion, the area will stand as a special business district where residents and tourists can appreciate the European-style architecture and recall the city's past and shop in an exotic environment.



Italian-style Township to be Built in Shanghai

A construction plan of Shanghai's Pujiang Township along the Huangpu River has been released so as to solicit public opinions on urban planning.

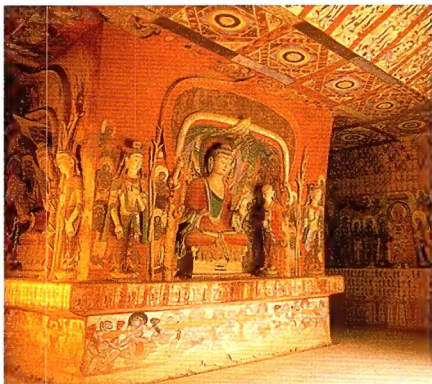
The plan released in mid-April was drawn up by the Italy-based Garigauti Company, a world-renowned design firm which had won the tender, and shows that the architecture of the township, the largest in Shanghai, will be Italian in flavour.

Construction projects in the central area of Pujiang will be completed by September and the entire project, covering 102.01 sq km, will take about 10 years to build at the cost of five billion yuan. An exhibition of the company's designs has been on display since April 18. Residents and visitors alike are encouraged to express their views on the construction plan.

Centre to Help Protect Dunhuang Grottoes

To minimize the potential damage inflicted by visitors, three companies in Beijing, Shanghai and Lanzhou have been commissioned to design a layout for a new customer service centre for the Dunhuang Grottoes. Watching videos in the centre, expected to open before 2006, visitors can learn about the history of the grottoes and gain a basic knowledge about how they should be protected.

Since entering the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1987, the Dunhuang Grottoes, in Northwest China's Gansu Province, are visited by many visitors from China and abroad in the peak travel season every



year. This has provoked sudden increases in temperature, humidity, and carbon dioxide and dust levels, which seriously threaten the survival of the painted frescoes and sculptures.

First Museum for Bamboo Slips and Wooden Tablets

China's first museum for bamboo slips and wooden tablets is due to open at the end of 2003 in Changsha, capital of Central China's Hunan Province. Covering five hectares, the museum will house more than 100,000 bamboo slips and wooden tablets, dating back more than 1,700 years, which have been unearthed in downtown Changsha since October 1996.

The slips and tablets, which are inscribed with characters, recorded in detail the political, economic, military, cultural and geographic situations in the Changsha Prefecture under the rule of the Wu Kingdom, contributing greatly to the study of the Three Kingdoms Period (220—280).

The ancient Chinese wrote on either wood tablets or bamboo slips, as paper only began to be used in the late Eastern Han Period (25—220). The Changsha municipal government has allocated more than 100 million yuan to build the museum.

Shanghai to Popularize Internet Services

About 100,000 residents of Shanghai will receive information technology (IT) training within the year, as part of the city's computerization strategy.

This will enable residents to adapt to an IT-based society and improve the quality of their lives, and they in turn will educate their families.

Under the plan, Shanghai will initially build a basic framework of a "Digital City" in 2007. As with government and corporate computerization, household digitizing is also an important part of efforts to keep the city technologically up to date.

By the end of 2002, Shanghai had 4.2 million "netizens", with an Internet service popularization rate of 32%, and had 350,000 subscribers of broadband connection services, with a popularization rate of more than 7%.

Executive Salon 行政沙龙



The 18th to 22nd floors are executive floors. An executive salon can be found at the 18th floor. As an "imbedded restaurant", the salon claims reception room, dining hall and small business center to provide the following services:

- *Convenient check in and check out at the executive salon.
- *Free buffet breakfast.
- *"Happy Hour", 50 percent discount for all drinks.
- *Free cafe, tea and soft drink.
- *Free copy within 30 pieces of paper.
- *Free use of notebook computer and printer for one hour at the executive salon.
- *Free fax receiving.
- *Latest magazines, newspapers and leisure books.
- *Get-together, friend-meeting and little rest at the executive salon.
- *English or Chinese newspapers for each room.
- *Fresh flowers in bath room.
- *Mileage plus premier
- *Twice room cleanings for each day

For more information
please dial 6512 5555 -- 87



Worldwide Reservations

USA & CANADA (800)421-8795
TOLL FREE (800)273-2294 (CA ONLY)
NEW YORK (212)308-7491
LOS ANGELES (213)629-1114
LONDON (020)7584-6666
HONG KONG (852)2529-2713
TOKYO (03)3262-7021



長富宮飯店

HOTEL NEW OTANI CHANG FU GONG

■ 26, Jianguomenwai Avenue, Beijing 100022, China.

Tel: (86-10)6512-5555

Fax: (86-10)6513-9810

Web-site: www.cfgbj.com

E-mail: cfg@cfgbj.com

Geological Park Set for Stone Age Site

Chinese archaeologists are planning to build a geological park at Nihewan ruins in North China's Hebei Province to better protect the large number of Stone Age archeological finds and relics excavated in the area.

The ruins, fossils and stone tools record almost the whole evolution process from the Paleolithic Age to the Neolithic Age. Among the 30 ancient sites that have been excavated in China, which date back over one million years, archaeologists noted, 25 were discovered in the Nihewan Basin.

Nihewan was a large lake encircled by forest-covered mountains and vast pastures more than two million years ago, with a water area of more than 9,000 sq km, covering almost all of Yangyuan County, a major part of Weixian County and part of the Yanbei area in neighbouring Shanxi Province. The lake was turned into a vast plain as a result of movements of the earth's crust tens of thousands of years ago.

To further protect the Nihewan ruins, the relevant departments of Hebei Province are preparing to apply for World Cultural Heritage listing.

World Heritage Conference in Suzhou

The 27th World Heritage Conference will be held in Suzhou City of East China's Jiangsu Province in June 2003. This will be the first time for China to host an annual meeting of the World Heritage Committee, the Popular Science and Technology News reported. Participants from 175 countries and regions are expected to discuss and approve sites to be added to the UNESCO's World Heritage List.

The upcoming conference will also feature an exhibition on cultural heritages in the Asia-Pacific region and a China forum on world heritage.

Environment Protection Activities Launched in Guizhou

According to the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), a program of large environmental protection activities touring 14 of China's provinces and regions was launched in the Caohai State Nature Reserve, in Southwest China's Guizhou Province, in late April.

The activities also include tree-planting to prevent soil erosion and deterioration of the environment in the sources of the Yangtse River, the largest river in China, and the Pearl River, the largest river in South China.

Caohai's grassy marshlands, covering 25 sq km in Guizhou's Weining County, boast 184 varieties of birds, of which 27 are under state protection, including the endangered black-neck cranes living on Caohai Lake, which covers 96 sq km.





Mt. Songshan — Central One of China's Five Sacred Mountains

Travel Boasting Taishi and Shaoshi hills, the Songshan Mountain has 36 peaks, of which the main peak stands at 1,494 metres above sea level. With its precipitous location along the Yellow River delta, the mountain had been a strategic place fought over by various military forces as well as an ideal place for past emperors to make inspection tours. Hence, plenty of historical ruins and sites can still be found today on the mountain.

The world-famous Shaolin Temple is located on the northern slope of Shaoshi Hill, with the Wuyu (Five Breasts) Peak at the back. The temple was first built in 495 and experienced its heyday in the Tang Dynasty (618—906). Nowadays, the temple is frequented by travellers as well as people who come to learn Chinese martial arts.

Transport: Take a flight or train to Zhengzhou or Luoyang city in Henan Province. Catch a long-distance bus at the Zhengzhou Railway Station to Dengfeng City at the foot of Mt. Songshan. Major scenic spots of Songshan can be reached by buses in Dengfeng.

Admissions: Songshan 20 yuan, Zhongyue Temple 10 yuan, Songyang Academy 10 yuan, Northern Wei Dynasty Songyue Pagoda 10 yuan, Shaolin Temple 40 yuan.

New Park Opens in Xi'an

Shaanxi A science and technology park built by Xi'an Jiaotong University has begun operation after two years of preparations in the capital of Northwest China's Shaanxi Province.

The park is believed to be the largest of its kind in western China, covering one million square metres after five years of construction. The park is expected to be home to 300 enterprises, fostering 500 high-tech companies and applying 300 technological achievements to production, thus bringing in 10 billion yuan annually.

Kanas Lake Scenic Area Refurbished

Xinjiang A popular tourist site in recent years, Kanas Lake located in northern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has been suffering from destruction of its scenic area. However, tourist reception facilities erected around the Kanas Lake will be gradually dismantled and it will become a state-level nature reserve within 2003, so as to revive its natural appearance.

According to staff from the Kanas Environment and Travel Management Bureau, most hotels, centres, and restaurants in the scenic area will be dismantled in three years, and will be moved to an area around Jiadengyu Valley about 30 km away from the Kanas Lake Scenic Area. At the new site, a travel reception centre will be established, while only a small part in the scenic area will be built with hostels and shopping huts. The centre is expected to open this August. There will also be 50 to 60 eco-friendly buses transporting visitors between the reception centre and scenic area.



Top 10 Archaeologist Sites of 2002 Announced

Archaeology The Chinese Society of Archaeology revealed on April 13, 2003, its list of the top 10 Chinese archaeological findings of 2002. The top 10 are:

1. A historical site in Gegiao, Southwest China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region where Neolithic people made stone artifacts.
2. Relics of an ancient city in Liye, Central China's Hunan Province, where more than 36,000 bamboo slips documenting events of the Warring States Period (475—221 B.C.) were unearthed.
3. A tomb of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.—220) in Rizhao, East China's Shandong Province.
4. Remains of a pagoda in Yenan, North China's Hebei Province.
5. A tomb in Taiyuan, capital of North China's Shanxi Province, in which 330 sq m of colourful murals were found. Both 4. and 5. date back to the Northern Dynasties (386—581).
6. Remains of the capital of the Bohai Kingdom found in Yanbian, Northeast China's Jilin Province, which prospered in the Tang Dynasty (618—907) and mysteriously fell into oblivion.
7. Remains of a grand palace covering 50,000 sq m in the old capital of the Jin Dynasty (1115—1234) unearthed in Ancheng, Northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.
8. An ancient distillery found in Lidu, Central China's Jiangxi Province, dates back to the Yuan Dynasty (1269—1368).
9. Relics of a county in Badong, Central China's Hubei Province, which prospered from the Northern and Southern Dynasties (389—589) to the Song Dynasty (960—1279).
10. Remains of a porcelain warehouse used in the Song Dynasty in Ningbo, East China's Zhejiang Province.



Marvellous Hong Kong from Helicopter

Hong Kong

Ever thought of getting a bird's-eye view of the fascinating skyline and scenery of Hong Kong from a helicopter? Now you have the opportunity for this unforgettable experience.

Launched by Helicopters Hong Kong Ltd. (HeliHongKong), the "Helicopter Panorama" flights have been highly popular since they began. HeliHongKong provides both FIT (Free Independent Traveller) and chartered flights. The helicopter leaves at 3 p.m. sharp every day from the Central Heliport opposite the Tamar Site, taking you through the sky over the Kowloon Peninsula, Kwai Chung Container Terminal, Tsing Yi, Ocean Park, Happy Valley, and returns to the Central Heliport. The 12-minute trip only costs HK\$800. In the Buy 2 Get 1 Free Promotional Offer, each person costs only HK\$534! For the chartered flight, there are three routes (A, B, and C). Route A (12 minutes) costs HK\$3,000, Route B (30 minutes) costs HK\$4,900, and Route C (60 minutes) costs HK\$9,800.

Moreover, the 30-minute sky tour organized by CAAC Holidays starts at 3:15 p.m. everyday, flying over Tsing Yi, Discovery Bay, Giant Buddha, Ocean Park, Stanley, Lei Yuen Mun, and returns to the helipad. Visitors can fully appreciate the scenery and surrounding landscapes of Hong Kong. The trip costs HK\$1,200. Every two guests can invite one relative or friend to enjoy the trip. So the trip only costs HK\$800 for each person.

The helicopter is a six-seater Eurocopter AS 350 B3. Its windows are big enough for great scenic views and the seats are comfortable and spacious.

To get more up-to-date information, please inquire at:

HeliHongKong

Tel: (852) 2108 9899/ 2108 9979

Fax: (852) 2108 9938 Website: www.helihongkong.com

CAAC Holidays Limited

Tel: (852) 2780 4482/ 2332 3608

Fax: (852) 2526 9022



Bird's-eye view of Cheung Chau



HeliHongKong
港聯航空

East Asia Airlines
亞太航空

Heli SHUTTLE
直升穿梭



只需16分鐘
16 Minutes of Travel

旅程倍輕鬆
Hours of Enjoyment

訂位熱線 Reservation Hotline

澳門 Macau (853) 727 288

香港 Hong Kong (852) 2108 9898

www.helihongkong.com

電郵 Email: sales@helihongkong.com

Heritage Protection Committee Set Up

Sichuan A body aiming to better protect world heritage sites in China was formed in early March at the Dujiangyan Scenic Area in Southwest China's Sichuan Province.

The World Heritage Work Committee was jointly initiated by the management committees of 21 world heritage sites including the Great Wall, Summer Palace, Temple of Heaven, Jiuzhaigou Scenic Area, Dujiangyan irrigation system, Suzhou gardens and the ancient town of Lijiang.

The non-government organization will help the government improve the management and protection of world heritage sites and boost cooperation with international organizations on both protection technologies and information exchanges. The organization is affiliated to the Association of China's Scenic Spots which helps government organizations in their management of the country's 28 heritage sites.

National Peony Park Opens

Luoyang China's National Peony Park recently opened in Luoyang, an ancient city in Central China's Henan Province in April.

Occupying an area of approximately 67 hectares, the park boasts more than 800,000 peonies and will hold peony genes offered by the world's major peony planting countries. With more than 700 kinds of domestic peonies and about 130 from overseas, the park draws thousands of visitors and business people from home and overseas each day.

Historical records show that the breeding and growing of peonies by Luoyang people started in the Sui Dynasty (581—618) and continued during the heyday of the Tang Dynasty (618—907).

The Luoyang peony, a plant native to the city of Luoyang and dubbed the "queen of flowers", has been exported to more than 20 countries around the world.



More Travel Visa Free Countries/ Regions

Hong Kong The Immigration Department of the HKSAR (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) has published a list of 16 countries and regions which have approved a visa-free policy for holders of the HKSAR passport. The destinations are Andorra, Anguilla, Aruba, Cayman Islands, Cook Islands, Republic of Cyprus, East Timor, Ethiopia, Faroe Islands, Greenland, Latvia, Lebanon, Republic of Malta, Morocco, Rwanda, and St. Lucia. These places are all located in Europe, the Caribbean, Africa, Australia, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, North America and the Middle East. Though there is no need to apply for the travel pass in advance, travellers should be aware that entrance is still subject to the final approval of the immigration departments of these places.



Former Residence of China's Last Emperor Under Repair

Tianjin Repair work on the Garden of Tranquillity, or "Jingyuan", the former residence of China's last emperor Pu Yi is now underway in Tianjin Municipality and is expected to be completed in two years.

Pu Yi, the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty (1644—1911), the last dynasty under China's feudal system, ascended the throne when he was three years old and was expelled from the Forbidden City in 1925. Pu Yi fled to Tianjin and took up residence in the garden. He left the garden on Nov. 10, 1931, for Northeast China, becoming a figurehead emperor for a Japanese puppet regime. Pu Yi died of illness in Beijing in 1967.

An exhibition hall for the last emperor is to be set up within the 3,360-sq-m garden with cultural relics collected from throughout society.

Wild Yaks Kept in State Nature Reserves

Qinghai Eighty percent of wild yaks in Northwest China's Qinghai Province are living in state nature reserves to receive effective protection, according to the local wildlife protection department.

Most of wild yaks in the province inhabited the prefectures of Yushu, Golog and Haixi, which were covered by the Hoh Xil State Nature Reserves and the newly-created Sanjiangyuan (headstream of the Yangtze, Yellow, and Lancang rivers) State Nature Reserves.

Due to human activity, less than 10,000 wild yaks were now found in the province, half the number of the early 1960s. The animal was listed under the first level state protection. These days, however, only in Wild Yak Ravine around Golmud City, located in northwestern Qinghai, could local people sometimes spot wild yaks in large numbers.

With the deteriorating environment and overgrazing of grassland, the previous habitat of wild yaks shrank in recent decades. The poaching of the yak for its head which is considered a precious adornment, or for the meat as food also caused the rapid decrease in yak numbers.

JUNE

June

Horse race and archery are generally popular in Tibet, and the **Gyantse Horse Race** and Archery Gyantse enjoys prestige of being the earliest in history by starting in 1408. Contests in early times included horse races, archery, and shooting on galloping horse-back followed by a few days' entertainment or picnicking. Presently, ball games, track and field events, folk songs and dances, and barter trade are additions to the above. The **World Incense Day (Saga Dawa)** in heaven are believed to descend to the mortal world on this day. Incense is burnt in large scales and picnicking is done in public parks.



June

The Miao is known as an "Ethnicity of Festivals". Interested adventurers don't miss to explore the magnificent ethnic customs in Northwest China's Guizhou Province. Lots of activities will be held in June, including the **Fish Hunting Festival** (4/6, Little Flower Miao, Kaiyang region), **Dance Flower Festival** (4/6, Long Horn and Pie Miaos, Dafang County), **Love Song Festival** (5/6, Buoyei ethnicity, Qinglong region), and **Exorcism Theatre Festival** (4/6, Yi ethnicity, Weining region).

1~5/6

There will be a series of activities celebrating the Dragon Boat Festival in Taiwan, too: the **Erlong Village Dragon Boat Race**, **Taipei International Dragon Boat Tournament**, **Taipei County Bitan Dragon Boat Races**, and **Lugang Dragon Boat Races** will be held in Jiaoxi Township (Yilan County), Dajia Riverside Park (Taipei), Green Lake (Taipei County), and Lugang Town (Changhua County) respectively. Besides dragon boat races, there are folk activities, sports carnival, public banquet, and various cultural performances, etc.

10~14/6

The Yueyang International Dragon Boat Festival falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, in commemoration of Qu Yuan (c. 340—278 B.C.), a great poet of ancient times. During the festival, people throughout the country hold dragon boat races, eat "zongzi" (glutinous rice dumplings wrapped in bamboo or reed leaves), drink realgar wines and hang Artemisia argyi (Chinese herbs used for air disinfection) in the doorway. Over 20 teams from the United States, Canada, Australia and countries throughout South East Asia and other parts of the world participate in the dragon boat races.



Mid June

Legend has it that Emperor Tianfu, the highest official on the Heaven, who had dispelled evils during his office on earth was born on the 17th day of the fifth lunar month. In the past, the locals of **Mt. Hengshan**, the South Sacred Mountain located in Hunan Province, will hold a series of **Temple Fair** to celebrate his birth on the same day. Buddhist and Taoist monks will attend the praying ceremony, following with brilliant domestic performances. However, the festival has been changed to be held in the 10th lunar month and lasts three to four days.

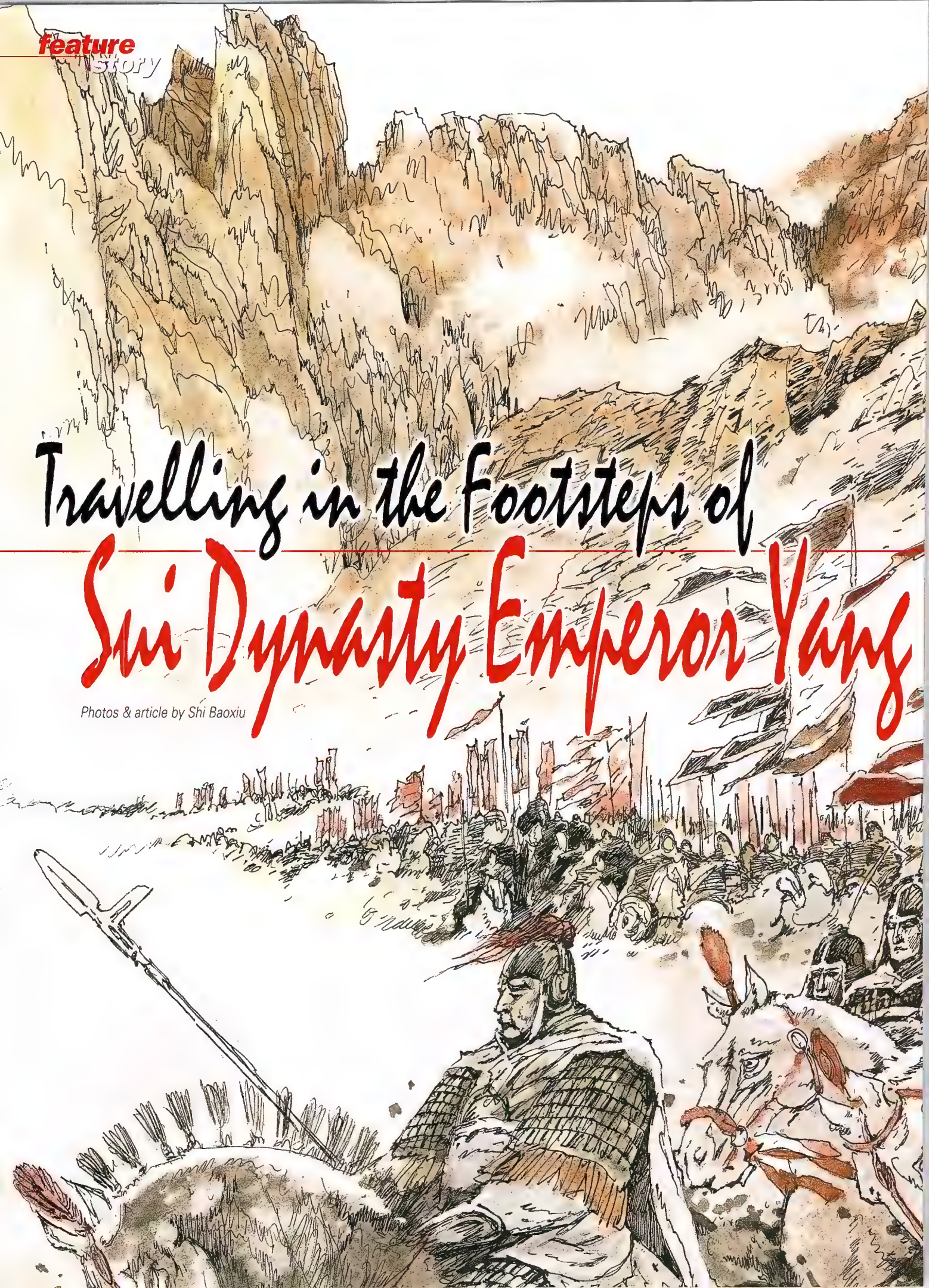
June~July

Since 1988, the **Beijing Daxing Watermelon Festival**, with "Watermelon as medium, making friends, advertising Daxing, developing economy" as the main theme, has been held successfully for 10 successive years, and achieving substantial economic and social benefit. During the festival, there will be tours of watermelon fields and watermelon tasting. Folk performances are given, and tourists may visit farmers' houses. Besides, a series of watermelon celebration activities with local features will be staged, including watermelon exhibition, watermelon game, watermelon economic and trade fair, assets reorganization fair, technological and scientific achievements exchange, talent market, etc.

feature
story

Travelling in the Footsteps of Sui Dynasty Emperor Yang

Photos & article by Shi Baoxiu





Travelling in the Footsteps of Sui Dynasty Emperor Yang

Map of Western Inspection Tour of Sui Emperor Yang



He was one of the most notorious figures in Chinese history, and one of the greatest military leaders, the Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty (569—618). To learn about the man and his times we decided to embark on a route once taken on his inspection of China's west. It was also part of the Silk Road.

The event took place in 609 when the country was politically stable and Emperor Yang's rule was secure. His nature of never being satisfied with what he had achieved drove him to do something that would shake the world. His objective was Tuguhun, a small state in Qinghai. During the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420—589), the Tuguhun people took advantage of protracted fighting among different forces of the Central Plain (comprising the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River) to expand their sphere of influence, extending their rule from Qinghai to the entire Hexi Corridor in Gansu and parts of Sichuan and Tibet. The result was the cutting of the Silk Road which was the major link between the Sui and the Western Regions. Emperor Yang did not want a strong power to emerge in the west of his kingdom and so he personally led an expedition force westward.

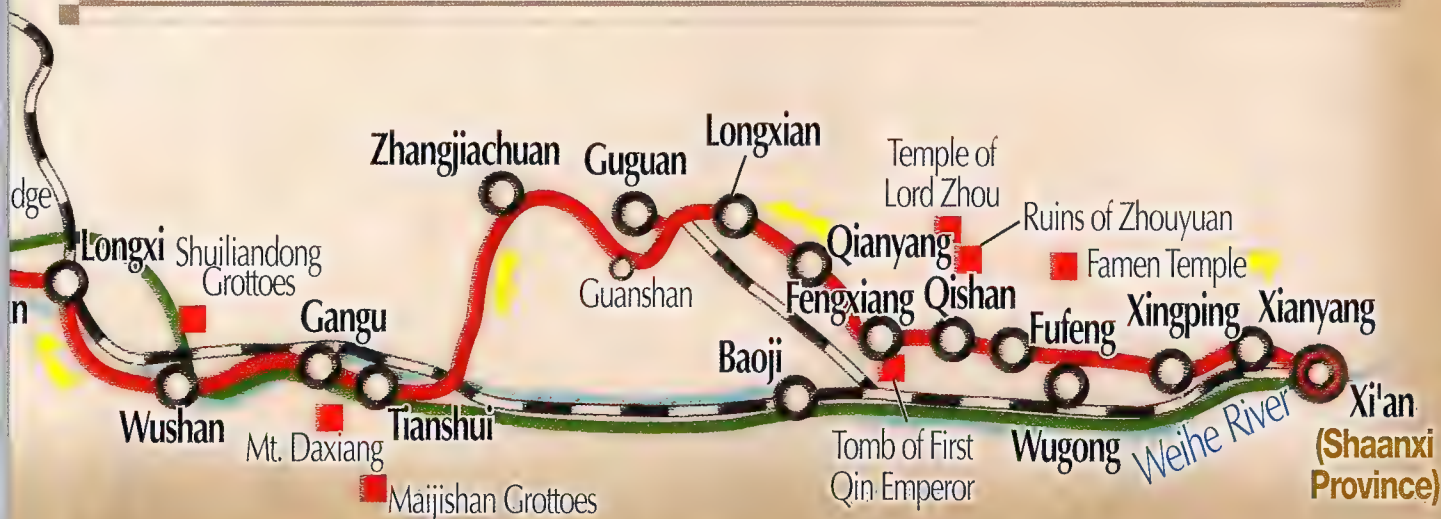
Sui Emperor Yang



Originally known as Yang Guang (569—618), he was the second emperor of the Sui Dynasty. His path to the throne was paved with blood and intrigue. First he pretended to be righteous, obedient and diligent, extracting his father's sickbed instruction to kill his brother Yang Yong. Then he sent troops to suppress another brother, Yang Liang. Finally, he killed his father on the pretext of visiting him during the latter's illness, usurping state power.

Always eager for a distinguished career, he issued decrees to build an eastern capital in Luoyang in Henan Province, to construct the Great Wall, to pave express roads and open the Grand Canal. He also loved to travel. Three times he visited Jiangdu (present day Yangzhou in Jiangsu Province), and twice he went to the north of the country. He also made three trips to Zhuozhou (south of today's Beijing). He moved about frequently between the capital city of Chang'an (present day Xi'an) and the second capital of Luoyang.

In his early days as the emperor, he did introduce new policies and rules such as adding new subject in the imperial exam, establishing exchanges with neighbouring countries, improving international relations and promoting border trade. His inspection tour to Qinghai and the Hexi Corridor was a successful trip both militarily and diplomatically. His every deed and trip outside the capital, however, incurred severe burdens and catastrophe on the country and people, resulting in many deaths. Thus he was always known as a tyrannical ruler.



Xi'an — Linxia

Crossing the Western Gansu Plateau

Emperor Yang set out in great pomp and his entourage, including a great number of court ministers, generals and concubines, was supposed to be 400,000 strong. They left Chang'an, later known as Xi'an, then the capital in March 609 and moved westward through Xianyang and spent a number of days in Fufeng, hometown of the Yangs. Later, a place in Fufeng known as Yangling (Yang Mausoleum), became the eternal resting place for Emperor Yang and his father.





Opening spread drawing: In 609, Sui Emperor Yang lead the troop personally, crossing the peak of Mt. Daban from Wujianfang post, heading to the Haomen bridge at the foot of the mountain straightly (illustrated by Gao Minquan).

1. Once the hunting ground for Sui Emperor Yang, the mountains in Longxi have turned to farmlands today
2. Farmers living in mountains in Longxian own a tradition of growing red chili
3. The Daxiangshan Grottoes in Gangu are built on the peak where many temples are found

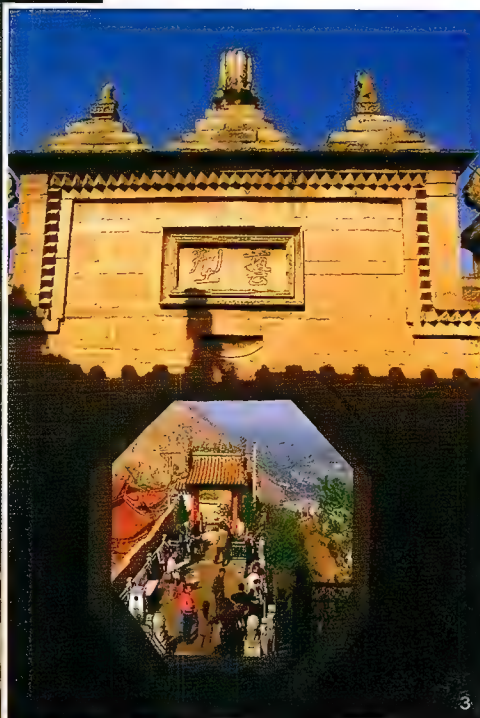
Hunting in Western Gansu with 400,000 Soldiers

In early July 2002, several of us set out from Xi'an to the Zhangjiachuan Hui Autonomous County, Gansu Province. Here we turned south to Tianshui, then west through Gansu, Wushan to Longxi (western Gansu). The *Book of the Sui Dynasty* records that Emperor Yang once "went hunting in Longxi". It is not difficult to imagine that the hilly area of Longxi must have been densely wooded over a thousand years ago. Otherwise, how could have the emperor find any animals to hunt on the barren loess hills of today?

The fact that the emperor was to take an inspection tour was by no means a small matter. For the remote counties in particular, it was tantamount to a great looting. For example in 107 B.C. when Emperor Wu of Han went to Longshan, the local magistrate had to commit suicide, simply because, given too short a notice of the coming of his high majesty, he did not have time to prepare enough food for the huge royal entourage.

Tributes from Every Clan

Today, preserved pork is a local specialty in Longxi. It is said to have been prepared by putting whole halves of slaughtered pigs into huge vats along with a wide range of ingredients for six months. When taken out, it is ready to serve after a quick boiling. I wondered whether the creation of such food had anything to do with the tragic suicide of the magistrate. The preparation of such large amount of meat over such a long time must have been related to the failure to entertain thousands of short notice visitors!



Crossing the Western Gansu Plateau



The Book of the Sui Dynasty says that while the emperor enjoyed hunting in Longxi, tribal chiefs from Gaochang, Yiwu, Tuguhun and Dangxiang, having learned of the emperor's western inspection, rushed to Longxi for an audience, bringing with them expensive

local produce as gifts. What is hard to comprehend is that while the ruler of Tuguhun had come to express his loyalty, why on earth did Emperor Yang decide to fight him two months later?

A World of White Hats

After the grand gathering in Longxi, the emperor and his entourage continued westward, roughly going through Weiyuan, Lintao to Linxia. Interestingly, once we crossed the bridge over the Taohe River, we entered Moslem country where almost all the men in the street, working in the fields or busy in the market wore a white hat while all the women had a shawl in black, or white or green over the head, leaving only their faces uncovered. We were now in Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture. Another sight was the large number of mosques, two to three in each village, in various architectural styles.

Linxia is the capital of the prefecture where the Moslem influence was even more pronounced. Not only were the mosques more magnificent, but the white hats and coloured shawls were more in evidence.

There are several monuments in Linxia that are musts for visitors. One is the residential house of Ma Buqing, a warlord of the last century. The second is the Grand Mosque and the third is the Red Palace. These structures have a common feature: exquisite and delicate brick carvings. Such objects are rarely seen elsewhere. The carving patterns contain no images of human beings but there are many flowers, grass, birds and animals, for Islam does not stand for blind worship of any icons.





1. The pattern baked cakes in Harbin, a habitat of Muslims, are fragrant and attractive.
2. The ancient Baling Bridge in Hanyuan County is an arched wooden covered bridge.
3. People in Shouyang Town always sun ginseng on the streets (by Liu Jun)
4. Mosques can be seen everywhere in Linxia.



Tuguhun: An Ancient Kingdom on the Qinghai Plateau

The founder of the ancient kingdom of Tuguhun was himself named Tuguhun, a member of the Murong Xianbei (or Xianpi) tribe in eastern Liaoning Province. In the 280s, he took his tribe westward to the Yinshan Mountains in today's Inner Mongolia after a war with other tribes over a piece of pastureland. Two decades later, they moved to the Lesser Jishi Mountains in today's Linxia. From this base, they pushed into the region inhabited by the Qiang people and expanded their territory to the areas south of the Qinghai Lake, near the source of the Yellow River and the northwest of Sichuan. Tuguhun himself died in 317. Until his grandson Yeyan took the throne, he decided to take his grandfather's name Tuguhun as his surname and also named his kingdom Tuguhun. Around 420, Achai became the seventh ruler of Tuguhun. He expanded the territory again to Zhangye and Shazhou (today's Dunhuang) in Gansu Province, and Songpan in Sichuan Province. Meanwhile, he learned much of the Han culture and thus brought the kingdom to its prime in history, as a strong state in Qinghai and even the entire northwest.

In 426, Achai died. Before his death, he had all his twenty princes standing in front of his death bed and tried to teach them to stay united and work together to keep the country strong by demonstrating how easily a single arrow could be broken and how difficult a bunch of arrows could be broken. In 444 what he had feared happened as his sons were locked in infighting. When the fighting ended, the country experienced rises and falls and by 605 when Sui Emperor Yang went to war heading a mighty force, the ancient kingdom had begun an irreversible decline. Finally, it was conquered by the Tufos, which spelled the end of this 350-year-old kingdom that had fought its way from Liaoning in the far east to Qinghai in the far northwest.

Jishi Mountain — Ledu

An Ancient Post House

Bidding goodbye to Linxia, we continued along the ancient path travelled by Emperor Yang westward to the Jishi Mountain, located in an autonomous county inhabited mostly by the Bonans. The earth on the hills was reddish and freshly harvested crops were neatly laid out in terraced fields. Tied in bundles, the crops looked as if they were terracotta soldiers unearthed from an emperor's tomb.



Crossing the **Turbulent Yellow River**

In the county seat, we saw the famous Bonan knives which looked coldly menacing when pulled from their sheaths. The curve of the knife marks a strong difference from those favoured by the Mongolians, Tibetans and Uygurs.

The Yellow River water here appeared to be very clear without any mud or sand. The flow was turbulent and at bends waves surged and whirlpools turned. To row a wooden boat in such water was highly dangerous. But neither book gave any specific description as to how he crossed the river. According to speculation, it would have been

extremely difficult to build a bridge over such turbulent and wide river, but to use boats to ferry across, how long it would have taken to ferry tens of thousands of soldiers and horses! How about chaining boats together to serve as a floating bridge? It was possible, because when he crossed the river, it was late April, a time usually when the river flow was at its height.

On the other side of the Yellow River is the territory of Qinghai, where the mountains are tall and precipitous while the forests are dense. Not far south from the bridge is the Mengda Heavenly Lake, a barrier lake formed after a huge volcanic explosion. Most of the



Travelling in the Footsteps of Sui Dynasty Emperor Yang

1. Boundless red earth field is seen in the Jishishan Autonomous County (by Liu Jun)
2. Old men telling visitors the past of Guanting, the first ancient post in entering Qinghai Province
3. A house number plate in Zhaizai Village, Guangting Town
4. Sui Emperor Yang had had crossed the Yellow River from Dahejia Town. The pass, named Linjindu, has already been built with a bridge over the two banks of the river

inhabitants near the lake are Tibetans.

The path the emperor took turned right at the bridgehead and headed north. After five kilometres, the road enters a town called Guanting. Some 30 minutes further ahead is the ancient Gushan post house .

Magnificent Military Exercise

The several sections of the ancient city wall of Gushan Post House are still very solid. Once having arrived here, the emperor built camps and began to drill his troops. He even staged a massive military parade and exercise near the Boyan Hill, which is the Machang Hill on the eastern part of the Laji Mountains today. The terrain was not terribly dangerous, but it was certainly mighty. History books have clear descriptions of the exercise: "There were 40 armies each consisting of 10,000 soldiers and 5,000 cavalry horses." "Emperor Yang rode in a cross-country cart pulled by six black steeds. All the officials in military attire followed on horseback close behind. The army, 400,000 strong, followed their units' flags under the leadership of their commanders. As the drums were beaten, soldiers shouted and horses whinnied and their voices echoed in the valley...." As we stood on the slope of the

Posts on the Ancient Silk Road

The Sui and Tang dynasties marked the most prosperous period of traffic on the Silk Road. After Emperor Wen of the Sui Dynasty unified China, he paid a great attention to improving transportation on the Silk Road by building post houses at regular distances, in accordance with the terrain, natural environment, population and economic conditions. The post houses provided such facilities as accommodation, warehouses and stables for travellers both Chinese and foreign, the Chinese army and messengers of the government, as well as businessmen and tourists, facilitating trade. Of course those who wanted to make use of the services of the post houses had to first produce travelling documents.



Machang Hill and faced the rolling mountains, we could not help imagining what a magnificent sight it must have been when the huge army of 400,000 was deployed on the hill.



Xining — Haomen Bridge

Crossing the Daban Mountain

Having reviewed his troops at the Bayan Mountain, Emperor Yang and his huge army continued the westward push and arrived in Xining, capital city of Qinghai Province. At that time, Xining was probably a patch of wasteland. They trudged through the valley of the mountain north of Xining to today's county seat of Datong.





1. The Datong River runs amidst the 'continuous' mountain ranges between the Daban and Qilian mountains
2. Hanging outside the entrance gate of Niangniang Temple is the calligraphy work which has recorded the history of Emperor Yang
3. A poultry exchange market in the suburb of Xining



The Concubine who **Became a Nun**

Datong County at that time did not exist and from history books we have learned that on May 18 that year, Emperor Yang hosted an elaborate dinner for his court ministers and generals on the Jin'e Mountain (popularly known today as Mt. Niangniang) on the right of the ancient path.

Before we entered Datong County seat, we were already shocked at the precipitous mountain on one side of the town as we came face to face with this abrupt terrain. Indeed, it is very rare to find a county seat standing so closely to such a majestic looking mountain, not to mention the mountain cliffs that run directly down to the street. Magnificent-looking halls, pavilions and towers had been built on the dangerous mountain, in addition to a long corridor held in suspension against the mountain cliff. This was the Mt. Laoye, while Mt. Niangniang, the site of the banquet, was seven kilometres west of here by the a section of the Great Wall erected during the Ming Dynasty.

There is a story about Mt. Niangniang told by citizens of Datong County. According to the story when the emperor came to the place, a concubine called Jin'e was deeply impressed by the towering mountain, clear water and tranquil life of the local people. Having grown tired of the life inside the palace, she appealed to the emperor to allow her to leave him and become a nun to spend the rest of her life here. Her request was granted. Many years later, Jin'e died of illness. To remember her, the local people had a grand temple built and renamed the mountain after her.



Crossing the Daban Mountain



Encouraging the Troops Before the Battle

Entering through the gate, we saw the Main Hall and the side halls. In the Main Hall was a coloured statue of the former concubine flanked by court ladies, one holding a sword and the other a seal. Most interestingly, the murals on both sides of the walls depicted how the concubine

turned into a fairy in heaven.

There might have been two purposes for the emperor to host the dinner at the Niangniang Shan. One was to encourage his troops just before the decisive battle with Tughun once they reached the Daban Mountain. The other was that the Daban Mountain was both tall at more than 4,000 metres above sea level and the terrain was dangerous. This made it entirely necessary to boost the morale of the

troops and make sure they were rested. A grand dinner for the military was undoubtedly a sound preparatory move before a hard battle. Despite his many shortcomings in getting along with other people, he did this with a clear mind.

As we pushed north from the county seat of Datong, we saw many solid mounds which were landmarks of the ancient path. Gradually, the valley narrowed to the north and trees became dense and thick. The scene of the Heishui Reservoir was unusually fantastic. White birches covered the slopes on both sides of the reservoir. It would be a great feast for the eyes if you come over in autumn, for frost turns birch leaves into an impressive transparent golden colour.

Crossing Mt. Daban from Two Routes

This was the main road crossing the Daban Mountain along which Emperor Yang made his way by conquering this precipitous mountain ranging 4,300 metres above sea level. In addition, there are two routes, on the east and west. The eastern route goes west from Datong County, through Huzhu County where it turns north to cross the Daban Mountain at Pamu Valley to reach Ganchankou. This route is particularly difficult.

Huzhu is an autonomous county mostly inhabited by the Tu



1. On the head of every Tu lady is decorated with a mirror
2. The Dafanghe Bridge south of Haomen Town is near to the place where Emperor Yang once built the Haomen Bridge
3. Xianmi Canyon, once called Haomen Canyon, was where Emperor Yang stationed the troops to prevent the Tuguhun troops from escaping
4. The Tu people are fond of watching Qin-style opera

3



ethnic minority group. Now a folk culture village demonstrating the unique lifestyles of the minority group has been opened on the border of the county seat where visitors come to appreciate and purchase Tu style embroidery and listen to folk songs as well as to try some of the delicacies of the local minority people. Of course, visitors can also stay the night to enjoy the comfort of Tu-style houses.

The western route sets out from Haiyan, and crosses the Datong Mountain at Chaidar Mountain Pass. Though much longer, it follows relatively gentler terrain. Once down the mountain, it goes into a pastureland. Beyond the green grass are mountain peaks gracefully covered with snow all year round. Glaciers quietly go down the slope following the mountain terrain. Tibetans who inhabit this area maintain their unique way of life.

Qingshizui — Menyuan — Ganchankou

The Golden Datong River Valley





Qingshizui — Menyuan — Ganchankou

The Golden Datong River Valley

We followed the same route taken by Emperor Yang and his mighty army into the Datong River Valley, flanked by the Qilian and Daban mountains. The Datong River originates from the Datong Snow Mountain in Haixi Prefecture and roars its way from the northwest to the southeast, cutting through Qinghai and Gansu provinces to enter the Huangshui River, along a course of more than 300 km.

Death on the River

Though not a long river, its volume of water is huge. In ancient times, rivers flowed their natural courses without the interception of dams and at that time, this river must have been extremely turbulent. It was no wonder that on May 24, the emperor's army ran into trouble.

At the time, the Datong River was known as the Haomen River. The minister of works who had arrived at the riverbank earlier had a bridge built by his soldiers and civilians, but the bridge broke while the army was crossing it. Officers and men, and even an imperial concubine fell into the river and drowned. Enraged, the emperor had the minister and other nine supervisors executed. The rebuilt Haomen River Bridge



was much more solid, but it took the army several more days to gingerly cross it.

Today, not a single trace of the ancient battle is visible along the Datong River. Instead, it is a world of idyllic scenery characterized by peace and tranquility. If you come to Menyuan at the end of June or early July, you will find the endless stretch of rapeseed fields with golden blossoms intoxicatingly beautiful. Near Qingshizui Town north of the bridge, rapeseed fields belonging to a state-owned farm roll out from the riverbank all the way to the foot of the Qilian Mountains, creating a world of golden blossoms. It is by no means exaggerating to describe it as a golden sea embellished with roads and dotted with villagers' houses. The dark green Qilian Mountain with their snow-crowned pointed peaks serve as the

bank of the golden sea.


Defeating Tughun's Troops from Two Routes

Some 20 km east of Qingshizui is the seat of Menyuan County. The area around the county town and the valley to the west present an



Previous spread photo: The grassland around Mt. Qilian is grown with rapeseed flowers in every summer (by Wang Wenming)

1. A bee-keeper collecting honey in Menyuan
2. Once where Emperor Yang lead a large troop, the Datong River Valley now becomes a paradise for farmers
3. Golden flowers blossom on the wetlands of Datong River (by Li Shengli)
4. Attractive farmlands on the river valley plain (by Li Shengli)

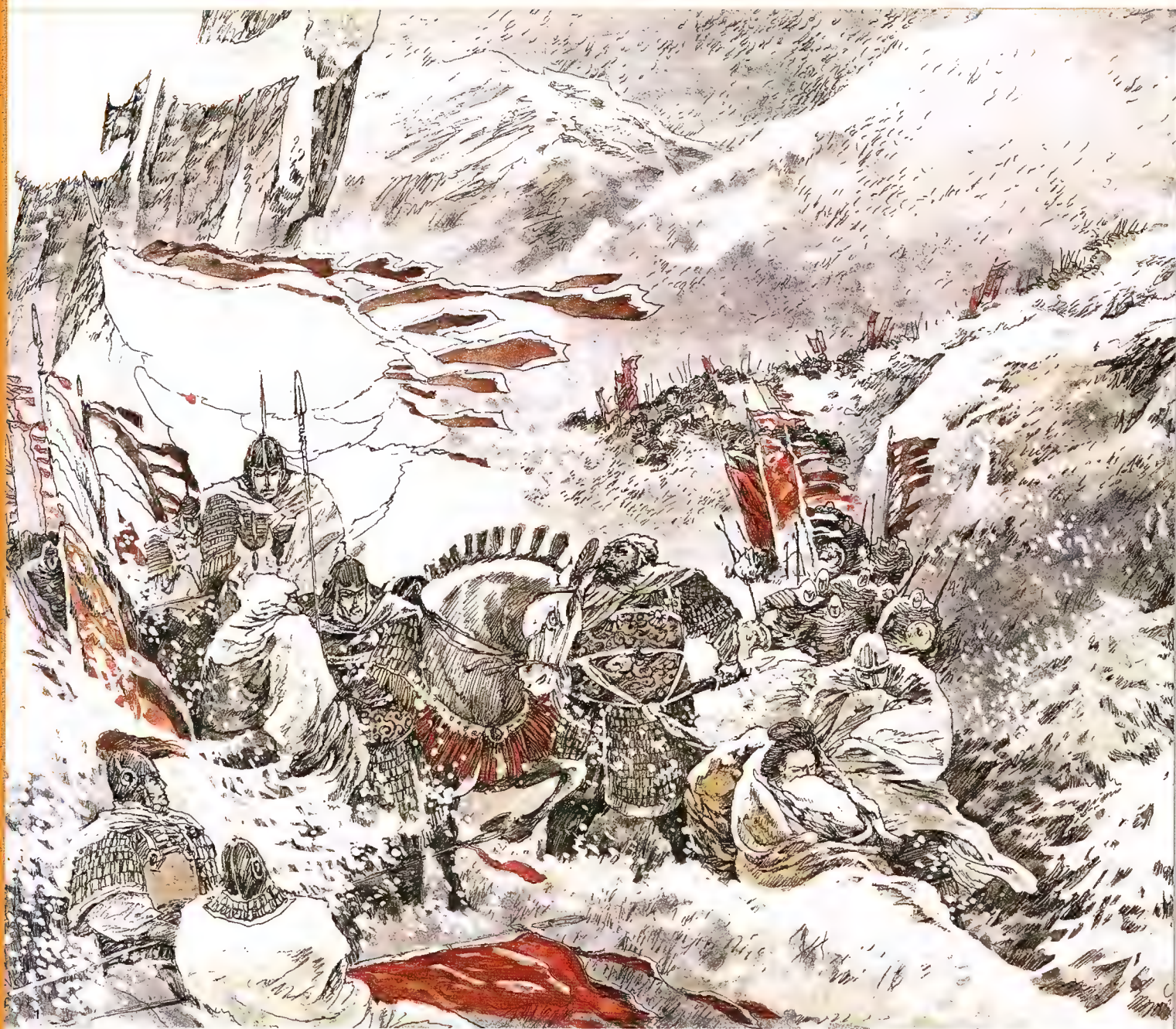


entirely different scene. The golden sea is no longer to be seen. A colourfully-spotted landscape created by patches of rapeseed fields and green wheat fields in different shapes and sizes mingle with each other, covering almost the entire mountain slopes, even the ridges, gullies and the terraced land created by water along the Datong River. This scene is closely connected with the land ownership system, for the fields are owned by individual farming families who cultivate whatever they like in their own plots, be it rapeseed, wheat, barley, beans or peas. Everything is original and unintentional, but the pieces of farmland do create a visually beautiful pattern that seems to be a masterpiece of careful planning. After more than 30 km of the river valley of changing colours, the road enters into the Xianmi Valley. Turning southeast at Xianmi Town, the road passes Zhugu, Ganchankou, Jiading, Zhalongkou and leads to Liancheng Town which was once the home of a local tribal chief. For more than 100 km, the Datong River Valley is almost a world of dense forests and precipitous cliffs. Emperor Yang defeated Tuguhun's Troops in this area. Then the region along the Datong River and the land around the Qinghai Lake became once again part of the territory of the Sui Dynasty with the Qiangchong Road and Huangzhong Road which were parts of the Silk Road opening to traffic once more.

Yong'an Town — Jingyang Ridge — Biandukou

Summer Snow in Biandukou

Now victorious, Emperor Yang, along with his entourage, continued northward, through Yong'an Town, crossing the Jingyang Ridge and turning on to the Qilian Mountain path at Obo Post House to march onto the Dadouba Valley (today's Biandukou Canyon).



Tuguhun Military Base in **Yong'an Town**

We continued along the same road to Yong'an Town. On top of the city wall, we found the town about the size of three football fields

with the wall basically intact on all four sides. In the northern part were several dozen bays of residential houses. Sheep sheds adjoin the city wall and the walls of the sheds were built with bricks made of sheep



Travelling in the Footsteps of Sui Dynasty Emperor Yang

1. In early June in 604, it was mid-summer when the corpse of Emperor Yang passed through Biandukou Canyon of Mt. Qilian. Suddenly, the sky turned and the temperature dropped sharply. Having no preparation for this, many soldiers and horses died (illustrated by Gao Mingquan)
2. This bottom-line tower outside the Obo Ancient City was built in the Ming Dynasty.
3. The rare "modern" building found in Obo Township
4. Fortress in Qilian County illustrating winter

droppings which had a stiflingly strong smell. This was once the barracks where Tughun stationed his troops. Later, Yong'an Town served as a fortress and post house for several dynasties until it was abandoned during the Qing Dynasty.

Returning to the highway, we continued northwestward, drove across Jingyang Ridge to the ruins of the ancient Obo Post House.

Three Hours of Sunlight in the Canyon

Turning west at Obo and going upstream along the Heihe River will lead directly to Qilian Tibetan Autonomous County where there are towering snow-capped mountain peaks and many glaciers. North leads to the Biandukou Pass which Emperor Yang traversed.



The Biandu Pass Valley was long and narrow and flanked by sheer cliffs. The sunshine was visible only for three hours a day around the noontime. Under the narrow strip of blue sky, the grotesque rocks and cliffs form groups of barren peaks without a single blade of grass or tree. Cold wind swept by our ears. It was noon in July, the heat of summer, but we felt no trace of summer warmth. Instead, we were gripped by a feeling of deep cold. Suddenly a group of Tibetan men

waving clubs jumped out from behind the rocks, roaring and shouting, blocking our way. Then they quickly moved aside to let us pass. They turned out to be members of self-organized group guarding against poachers or those who tried to cross the border illegally to graze their animals. We realized that we were now standing at the border between Qinghai and Gansu provinces.



Yong'an Town — Jingyang Ridge — Biandukou

Summer Snow in Biandukou



Summer Cold Killed Half the Army

Inside the territory of Gansu, bright sky was suddenly overcast with dark clouds and before 30 minutes had passed, it was totally dark. A strange thunderous sound, which we had never heard before, cracked in our ears. We turned back and saw black smoke like numerous ferocious dragons in the distance. We hurriedly took shelter in the vehicle. Next, the black dragons howled past, shaking our vehicle and throwing pebbles and sand at the windows and roof with a terrifying noise. Hardly had the black dragon-like wind stopped when thunder cracked and lightening broke the dark sky. More battering was heard on the vehicle's roof and windows. Hailstones the size of big red dates rained down mercilessly. Then a miracle, by no means a dream, suddenly appeared in front of us. In the hail and cold wind, a herd of some 100 yaks crossed the wasteland to return to the village, despite the severe beating of nature.



Our experience was similar to that of Emperor Yang and his army some 1,500 years ago. On June 9 that year, they ran into a serious mid-summer snowstorm and consequently, "more than half of the soldiers were frozen to death along with 90 percent of the

horses. Concubines either lost contact with their master or had to sleep in the mountains together with soldiers."

The peaks of the Qilian Mountain are mostly around 5,000 metres above sea level while the Biandu Pass was about 3,500 metres above sea level where snow in summer is by no means rare. Though the high-spirited Emperor Yang conquered the enemy state, he could not escape the wrath of nature. The difference was that we ran into dark winds and a hailstorm, but he was caught by snow. And they had no place to hide.

Soon the hailstorm ended and sunshine returned, making the mountains more clearly visible. We followed the expansive and straight highway in a dash toward Zhangye.



*Travelling in the Footsteps of
Sui Dynasty Emperor Yang*



1. The spectacular silhouette of the mountain ranges around Branduker
2. The fresh and appetizing mutton and rice saimieali soup served in a Salar nationality restaurant in Qbo
3. Bulls returning to their home after a sudden fall of hailstones
4. Yong'an Ancient City had been the stationed site of the Huguohan king, later a military castle and post in the history



Biandukou — Zhangye

A Grand Gathering in the Hexi Corridor

Emperor Yang arrived in Zhangye on June 11, 609, and on June 17, he ascended Mt. Yanzhi in Shandan County. In the days that followed, he met with leaders or envoys representing more than 30 states in the Western Regions. Then he called a grand meeting of the emperor from the great empire on the Central Plain and heads of states of the Western Regions, an event that lasted for more than two months.





1. In 609, Emperor Yang held a grand tribute meeting in Zhangye. Leaders and ambassadors from Western Regions brought fruitful tribute items to Emperor Yang. During the meeting, Emperor Yang ordered all female in Zhangye and Wuwei to dress beautifully, and came to the site by wooden carts to bluff the momentum (illustrated by Gao Minquan)
2. Yugur men are born target-shooting and hunting masters
3. Yonggu Ancient City where Emperor Yang stationed with his troop before entering the Hexi Corridor



Dressing in Style On Credit

During this period, not only did elaborate banquets follow one another, but there were also stage performances to add atmosphere. In order to demonstrate the grandeur of his empire, the emperor ordered that young women in Zhangye and Weiwei be clad in their Sunday best and to line up for miles. When people had no financial means to buy new clothes and decorate their carriages, they were given loans by the county courts. These painstaking efforts of pomp and ceremony were not in vain and one result was that the chieftain of Yiwu State (located in present day Hami) announced at a banquet that he would give a huge area of land to the emperor. In response, the emperor immediately announced that four prefectural governments would be set up in Xihai (areas around today's Qinghai Lake), Heyuan (present day eastern suburbs of Qinghai, Shanshan (areas around today's Lop Nur) in Inner Mongolia, and Qiemo (along today's Qiemo and Ruqiang) in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. He also decided to station troops and open up wasteland along the Yellow River near the Jishan Mountains, to prevent Tughun from returning. Leaders of various states followed the suit of the Yiwu State and made their due tributes. This signaled that the Silk Road had once again become a thoroughfare.

Mountains and Forests Beyond Zhangye

My trip in the footsteps of Emperor Yang now was about to come to an end, but I was still eager to learn more. In fact, the daily activities of people in Zhangye, such as the morning physical exercises in the

Biandukou — Zhangye

A Grand Gathering in the Hexi Corridor



Pagoda Square, the special local delicacies served in the street in the traditional style, the tricycles ready to carry commuters as well as the forest holiday zone on the bank of the Heishui River and day trips to the houses of farmers cultivating fruit in suburban Zhangye and many more are all strongly appealing.

Besides, about 100 km southeast of Zhangye, one will come to the Damaying Horse Farm of Shandan by the snow-capped mountains in an area of lakes, forests and grassland. Further east across Yongchang is Wuwei, once the seat of the government of Liangzhou whose special charm can well compare that of Zhangye.

1. Residents in Zhangye use to practise sword-dance early in the morning
2. One can taste a lot of snacks of fixed Gansu flavours on the streets in Zhangye

If you go west for more than 200 km from Zhangye, you will arrive in Jiuquan and the Jiayu Pass. Turning north from here along the highway in the Alxa Desert, you will come to Ejina Banner where groves of poplar trees, herds of camels, Mongolian yurts and the mysterious Heichengzi are tourist attractions.

Westward from the Jiayuguan Pass to Anxi of Guazhou, one will come to the ancient town of Dunhuang, famous for the ancient caves known as the Mogao Grottoes. The area of red

cliffs at Sanlong, where famous director Zhang Yimou shot his movie *Hero*, west of the Yumen Pass, is a newly developed tourist destination famous for its



magic natural beauty. From Dunhuang, Xinjiang, known historically as the Western Regions, is within reach.

Translated by F. Huang

From War to Festival: Luoyang Trade Fair

The fatal blow Emperor Yang dealt Tuguhun was undoubtedly a warning for other states. Furthermore, the policy of befriending the states demonstrated at the grand gathering in Zhangye convinced states in the Western Regions such as Yanqi, Qiuci, Shule, and Yutian to restore trade relations with the Central Plain. In the first lunar month of 610, Emperor Yang opened a great trade fair in Luoyang, then the second capital of his kingdom. Operas, acrobatics and magic shows were staged to attract merchants and entertain visiting leaders of other states, to let them present their tributes and engage in trade. He also ordered court officials and women residents to put on their best clothes and to accommodate keep the visitors in makeshift sheds along the street. During the fair, tents were erected, and food and wine were offered to allow residents to directly discuss trade deals with visitors from the Western Regions. It was stipulated that when a transaction was struck, visitors must be well entertained and given free food. Later the emperor also decreed that the trade fair be held once every year. As a result, as many as 44 states at one time participated in the event, creating a grand gathering unseen for hundreds of years since the Eastern Han Dynasty.

Words from the Author

When I read the line "Ancient route, west wind and a lean horse, heartbroken man roving in the remote corner of the earth..." written by Yuan poet Ma Zhiyuan (1260—1334) in childhood, I was especially moved by the desolate atmosphere described. Hence, I always think of an image of a traveller, who has travelled to the corners of the world, riding on a thin, old horse, and being alone on an abandoned mountain trail.

Now, I've finally made such a trip. I've been to a route where an ancient emperor made his inspection tour, a route where the Han soldiers fought with the barbarians, as well as a route combining part of the Silk Road. However, the ancient path has become a peaceful land. The past history is left as legends passed by the civilians from generation to generation.

I wish to trace other paths after this trip, until I've visited all ancient paths in Northwest China, so as to share my experiences and feelings with the readers.



Scenic Spots and Historical Attractions of This Journey

Gansu Province

Majishan Grottoes One of the four major sites of Buddhist grottoes in China, where more than 7,800 statues made during a dozen dynastic periods from the Northern and Southern to the Qing, are scattered in 1,940 caves on the cliffs. A great Buddha statue that seems to be glued to the cliff is even more eye-catching.

Transport: Located on the northern section of the Qinling Mountains 45 km southeast of Tianshui City. There are buses going to the site from Tianshui city districts and the railway station.

Daxiangshan Grottoes The Daxiang (Elephant) Mountain looks like a lowering range from the front and a peak from the side. A statue of the Buddha with a moustache, built in the Northern Wei Dynasty some 1,300 years ago, sits in a huge cave at a height of 23 metres. There are more than 20 Taoist temples at the Elephant Mountain, all built in precipitous positions.

Transport: About 2.5 km north of Gangu County and can be reached by taxi or tricycle.

Baling Bridge Spanning the Weishui River, this typical wooden arch bridge was first built during the Ming Dynasty. It is impressive for its graceful and smooth contours.

Hongyuan Park, Donggong Palace and Moslem Cemetery

All these three group structures are located in Linxia County. Hongyuan Park was originally a garden of a rich official but now is a public park. The Donggong Palace was the private residence of Ma Buqing, a warlord active in the 1940s. The Moslem Cemetery was a burial ground of leading figures of the Moslem communities. The exquisite brick sculptures at all three places are of high artistic value.

Giant Buddha Temple The temple, first built in the Western Xia Dynasty, houses a reclining statue of Sakyamuni, founder of Buddhism, in the position in which he died. The temple is also famous for the Buddhist scriptures written in gold presented by the Ming Emperor.

Transport: As it is located in the busy downtown district of Zhangye, it is most convenient to go by tricycle.

Wooden Pagoda First erected during the Northern Dynasties (386—581), it has an underground chamber where a mechanical system turns the foundation to revolve the pagoda. The octagonal structure makes the pagoda highly elegant.

Transport: On the side of the Central Square, it can be reached by tricycle.

Qinghai Province

Mengda Heavenly Lake The lake is located on Dahei Mountain, 2,500 metres above sea level, in Xunhua County, Qinghai Province. Covering an area of 17,500 sq km, the lake is more than 20 metres deep. In the embrace of hills and virgin forests, the lake is known for its natural scenery.

Transport: Located some 50 km from Dahejia Town, it can be reached by hiring a taxi at the town. During summer, there are bus services. The scenic zone is equipped with hotels and restaurants.

Qutan Temple Located some 20 km from the seat of Ledu County, this Lamaist temple was first built during the Ming Dynasty. The majestic temple houses a great number of murals. The temple structures that rise and fall with the terrain demonstrate a strong imperial palace building style.

Transport: There are special buses going from the county seat to the temple. Taxis are also available and a trip costs 20 to 30 yuan.

Laoye Mountain Lying in the eastern part of Datong County, it joins the urban district. On this extremely precipitous mountain, a classic garden has been built halfway up. On the mountaintop is the ancient temple dedicated to the memory of Lord Guan. On the sixth day of the sixth month every year, a temple fair is held. In fact, the event is also a singing contest, an occasion to worship the mountain god, a commodity exchange fair and a dancing show. During the festival, the mountain is packed with people.

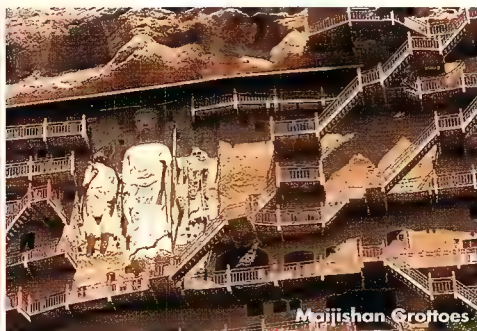
Transport: You can go there on foot or by tricycle, but you have to hire a vehicle to take you to the mountaintop.

Shanxi Guild Hall On one side of the Great Buddha Temple, it is a group structure complete with towers, terraces, corridors and pavilions, dating to the Qing Dynasty. Carvings on the bricks, stones and wood are extremely exquisite.

Shaanxi Province

Famen Temple A famous temple where the Tang court kept the remains of Sakyamuni, founder of Buddhism. In 1986, the pagoda collapsed during a night of heavy rain. Four pieces of bones of the founder of Buddhism and 121 pieces of gold and silver of unparalleled elegance, as well as ceramics whose colouring techniques had long been lost and glassware that had been buried in the underground chamber for over 1,200 years were unearthed.

Transport: There are regular buses going to the temple 10 km north from the seat of Fufeng County. On the eastern side of the Xi'an Railway Station Square, special "day trip to Famen Temple" mini-buses can be found.



Tips for the Traveller

Remarks This route is rather remote, not a well developed regular tourist route, and tourist buses are rare. Accommodation is relatively simple. Some of the scenic sites do not have clear signs of direction, which requires adequate preparation on the part of those who are eager to explore this section on the ancient Silk Road. They should be armed with detailed information, guidebooks and maps. Those pressed for time may concentrate on the section between Xining and Zhangye.

Transportation You're advised to alternate between long-distance buses, trains and hired vehicles. Towns and counties along the way are connected by public buses. The experienced traveller can skip the first section (between Xi'an and Xining), by flying or taking a train into Xining. Then hire a vehicle north to cross the Daban and Qilian mountains to reach Zhangye. To take the bus section by section may prove to be rather inconvenient. As for the cost of hiring a vehicle, a Sangtana or a van costs 300 to 400 yuan a day. A cross-country jeep costs 500 to 600 yuan a day.

Accommodation Except for the cities, the county seats rarely have star-rated hotels, but they do have hotels or hostels with standard guestrooms or suites equipped with a bathroom,

telephone and television. The rate is around 100 yuan a day. At the township level, there are smaller hostels which charge 20 yuan per person per day.

Food As the road cuts through Shaanxi, Gansu and Qinghai provinces, the local food strongly features wheat. Salty, sour and spicy are the predominant flavours. The further west, the more beef and mutton there is. Of high quality, the mutton does not have the usual smell of goat. There is a wide range and rich supply of fruit. In summer and autumn in particular, there are all kinds of melons, peaches, apricots, apples, pears and dates.

Climate Spring in the northwest often sees constant drizzle. Summer is mostly dry and rain is rare. Rainstorms and hailstorms, however, may come suddenly. Autumn is pleasant with bright skies. The difference in temperature during the day is drastic. In summer in particular, one has to wear a woolen pullover or a thick jacket in the morning and evening, but the temperature at noontime shoots up. However, it rarely rises beyond 30°C. There is virtually no hot weather in summer. The air is very dry and travellers are advised to be armed with creams to protect the skin and lips. Women in particular are advised to bring sun lotion, for the high altitude,

normally over 3,000 metres above sea level, offers strong ultra violet rays.

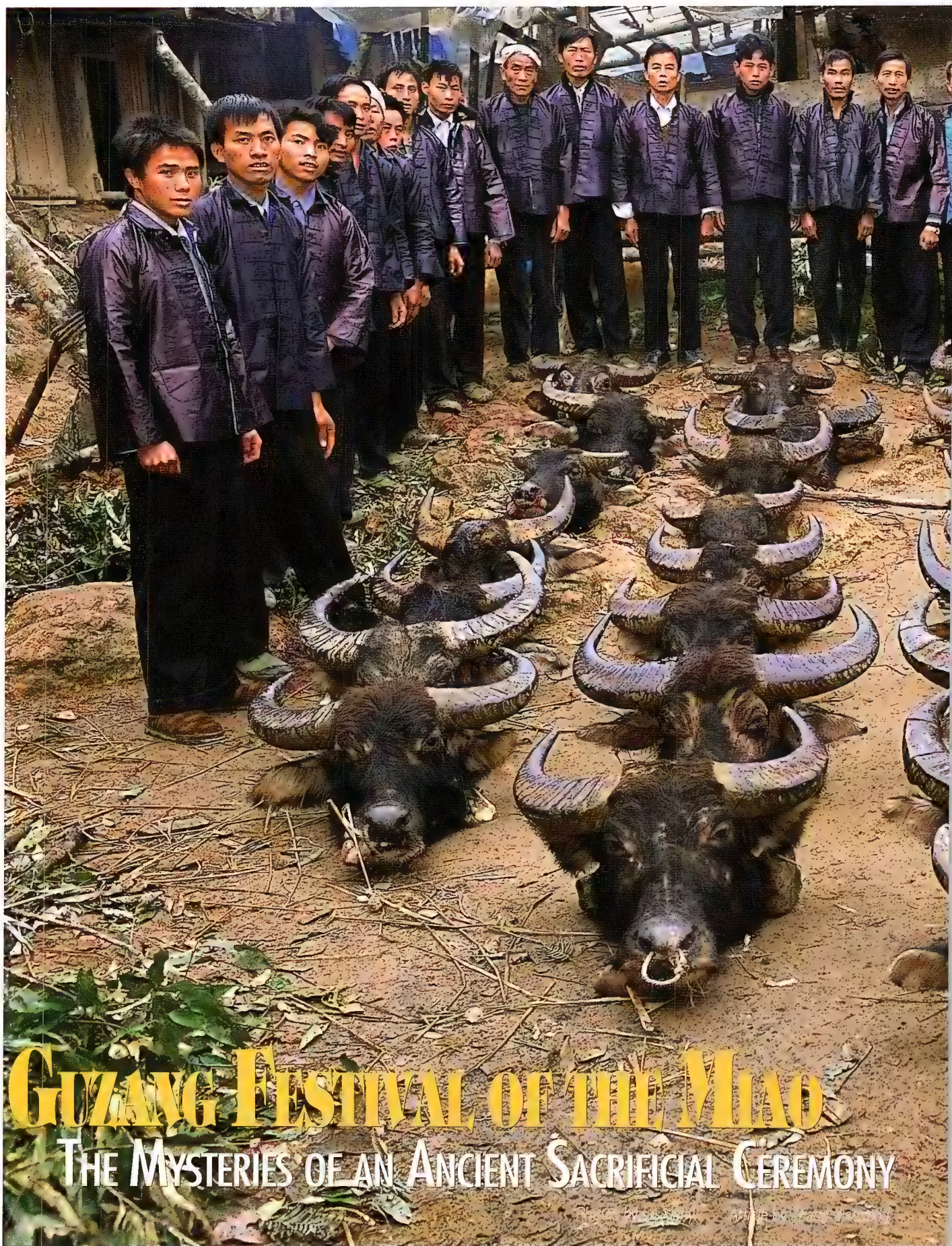
Local Produce

White yaks A special stock found in the reaches of the Datong River. Its meat can well compare that of yellow cattle, except it is more solid and less fishy. The duster made with its tail hair is supposed to have a natural magic quality. It can be bought at Menyuan and Datong.

Huzhu barley wine Brewed from local barley, the wine is aromatic, protective of the stomach and does not go to the head. Its effect subsides very quickly.

White mushrooms Naturally grown on the grasslands in Qilian County, they are big and thick. When cooked fresh, they produce a uniquely delicate taste.

Rapeseed honey The vast rapeseed fields provide a great supply. The natural and pure environment in the mountains also ensures good quality. It can be bought from the apiaries where the price is cheap and quality high.



GUZANG FESTIVAL OF THE MIAO

THE MYSTERIES OF AN ANCIENT SACRIFICIAL CEREMONY



Light azizle tells in the village on the day of bull sacrifice. The heads of the bulls are placed in rows, looking eastward. The head necromancer puts 12 cups of wine on top of the altar, and chants a mantra for each bull that tells him where to go. Finally, the bulls return to the ancestors' homes according to the path indicated.

GUZANG FESTIVAL OF THE MIAO

Deep within Yueliangshan (Moon Mountain) of southeastern Guizhou, the Miao people of the Jiaqu Village hold a grand ceremony to sacrifice bulls for their ancestors. Over one night, they kill 69 bulls, present the souls of the bulls to the ancestors and share with family and friends the carcasses. Over 15 days, they will meticulously complete a long and complex ceremony just like their ancestors thousands of years ago.

This sacred ritual is called “Guzang”, or “Bull Slaughtering”. It takes place every 13 years and is enshrouded in mystery.

Living with the Words of Ancestors

The Jiaqu people belong to the “Black Miao” group, a large and strong branch of the Miao ethnic group, with a population of over one million, they are mainly found around the Qingshui River and Duliu River regions which are called the Hinterland of the Miaos. Because black is their favourite colour of dress and they live on the peaks of tall mountains, some also refer to them as “High Mountain Miao People”.

The people of Jiaqu abide by the words of their forefathers and follow the traditions set by them.

Originally, when the forefathers of the Jiaqu people first arrived in the region around the Moon Mountain, they built their homes on the tallest peaks encircled by mountain ranges, overlooking the surrounding hills. Centuries passed and Jiaqu became a medium-sized Miao village with around 140 households and more than 700 people. The wooden houses are built on pillars around the mountains, looking for all the world like wooden castles.

A Festival Every Thirteen Years

It is the belief of the Jiaqu people that one has three souls, and on death one soul returns home to take care of the children and



grandchildren; one guards the grave; and another returns to the homeland of the ancestors, called the “Ouyoukong”. The ancestors there lead happy lives — playing the “lusheng” (a unique music instrument of the Miaos made of bamboo pipe) and drums, enjoying music and dancing. Ancestors are held in the highest regard at Jiaqu, because they gave their descendants valuable experience and tactics for survival after withstanding the turmoils of war, the difficulties of migration and a host of other hardships. They are the protector gods of the village, and when the Jiaqu people are troubled by demons such as natural catastrophes and disease, only the ancestors can bless their descendants. So abiding by their rules and showing them respect is the top priority in the lives of the Jiaqu people, as well as all people of the Miao ethnic group.

“Bull eating” — also called “taking from the bull”, “beating the bull”, “worship of the drum commune” — is an ancient Miao sacrificial ceremony conducted once every 13 years in units of “Jiang Lue” (a group bound by blood-relations and accounted for in terms of “drum communes”). It consists such rituals as “calling the ancestors”, “spinning the bull”, “stepping on the drums”, “killing the bull and worshipping the drum”, and “hiding the drum”. The killing of the bull is to allow their souls accompany those of their forefathers in heaven. The drum sacrifice stems from the Miaos’ worship of the female god, the Maple Mother. The early Miao people believed that upon death, souls would simply transfer elsewhere, and the wooden drum made of maple and cowhide was the new home of their ancestors’ souls and

spirits. Playing the wooden drums is said to raise the spirits of the ancestors. So it's no wonder that the bull killing and the drum sacrifice are the most important and sacred folk rituals.

According to the tradition passed down from earlier generations, the bull eating ceremony is held in turn by a village within the same "drum commune" once every 13 years. Jiaqu village and Baibei, Jialiang, Jihua villages belong to the same "drum commune", each taking turns. Because the bull eating is a lavish sacrificial ritual on a grand scale, with the village holding the ceremony killing at least 30 to 40 bulls each time, and in the more extravagant events killing up to 300 bulls, while the record is held by the village that once killed more than 400 bulls. At the end of the sacrificial ritual, the village is often left bare. Not all villages can afford to hold the poignant ritual. So only the village with the deepest pockets and most generous spirit can accept the flag to hold the next ceremony. The flag-receiving village is given great respect in the community, and the villagers have to tighten their belts and bear the financial burden that accompanies the undertaking.

The last time Jiaqu Village held the bull eating ceremony was in 1947, as in the previous 50 years, the village was too poor to accept the duty when its turn came round. But going to other villages to eat bull made the Jiaqu people feel somehow inferior. To preserve the dignity of the people of Jiaqu, they accept the flag for the next bull eating ceremony.

Choosing the Bulls

Guzang Festival is a complicated affair, and preparations start at least three years in advance, while some villages even take up to five to seven years. Of prime concern is the choosing of a fine bull as a sacrifice to the ancestors, who have left stringent requirements: the head of the bull must be square and straight, the neck thick and strong, eyes large and protruded, nostrils big and empty, with muscled limbs and powerful trunk, hooves the shape of wooden bowls, the two horns must be symmetrical and crescent-shaped, the more whorls it has in its hair, the better. If a bull can be found with five hair whorls, it is a



1. The head necromancer's headscarf is full of dried fish. Using dried fish as head ornaments represents the homelands of the Miao people near the main rivers and lakes. They believe fish can magically awaken the spirits of their ancestors
2. The Jiaqu Village is located deep in the Moon Mountain
3. The fishing method of the Miao people is ancient, yet quite smart



valuable prize bull.

The bulls for the sacrifice enjoy special privileges: they never need to plough the land or work in any way. Everyday somebody goes to cut tender grass from the mountain and mixes it with porridge for its feed. The creatures' only responsibility is to take part in the "Grand Rumble of Bulls", a fighting contest. After a number of such fights, the bulls become powerful, fierce beasts.

The Bull Keeper is the main character in the proceedings. The villagers choose him according to age-old traditions. He must be a direct descendant of the Jiaqu ancestors, with both male and female children, his household should be fairly well-off and he should be both a good and able person. The Bull Keeper at Jiaqu is Yu Laoni, 37 years old, the same as his wife Wei Laoya. They have one son and one daughter.

Sleepless and Speechless for Five Days and Nights

On the afternoon of the eighth day of the month, Huaba Mang, the Master Necromancer comes to the house of the Bull Keeper, with a group of 14 assistants known as "Gouheng". The master's job is not for everyone, he must be conversant with all the terminology and speeches to be used throughout the Guzang Festival, as well as highly fluent so that no mistakes are made. The Gouheng, or necromancer assistant, is the master's helper as well as a sacrifice master as selected by the ancestors through the grass divination method.

Yu Laoni and his wife were dressed in their finest and wore silver jewellery, with dried fish tied to their headscarves to symbolize the major rivers where the Miao ancestors originated. They must also put their hands neatly on their knees and sit in front of the fireplace with their eyes looking

downward. With their dress and solemn expressions they almost look like a King and a Queen. From now on, the couple cannot speak or sleep for five days and nights. With the sacred important duty on their shoulders, it is up to them to communicate with ancestral spirits on behalf of the Jiaqu people. A few village elders and older women take turns in accompanying them or watching them. During this time, their meals are delivered and they can go out to answer nature's call, but must quickly return to the fireplace and sit beside it in silence.

Darkness falls, and around the fireplace the Bull Keeper and his wife

sit with the village elders in the murky light of the hall. All is quiet except for the crackle of the burning firewood. Glutinous rice is being steamed in the iron wok, its fragrance and the steam fill the room.

The glutinous rice is made into rice cake and placed in a sieve, on top of which five dried fish, and two horns (one from a cow and the other from a bull) are laid. This procedure has been handed down through the generations and is only used at major events. The male horn is used for strong liquor while the female horn contains sweet liquor. The horns are placed straight up in the rice cake, as well as a piece of pork weighing one to two kilos, a bamboo container holding uncooked rice and a handful of hemp. Next to the sieve is a small wooden stool on which folded new clothes have been neatly placed. The garments have been dyed with indigo dozens of times and reflect a deep blue sheen where the firelight shines on them. Throughout the entire festival, the food and drink and clothing lie there in respect for



the use of the ancestors.

The primary goal of chanting the prayers is to invite the ancestors, so the singing goes on for quite some time. Once the chanting ends, it is up to the Bull Keeper's family to butcher a pig. One of the necromancer assistants dices the pork and makes it into 140 skewers, one for each household in the village, in a ritual known as "distributing meat skewers".

"Distributing meat skewers" is another essential Miao tradition. It features in other significant events of the Miao people, such as "the sweeping of the village" and "vanquishing ghosts with fire", and the greatest sin is dividing the meat unevenly.

As soon as the meat skewers are eaten, many rules come into play: eating vegetables is forbidden and people must speak in auspicious terms or a secret language. It is believed that these expressions are only understood by the ghosts of ancestors. The wild ghosts and bad ghosts can't make head or tail of them and therefore won't interrupt the ceremony.

At 3 a.m., the rooster's crow breaks the silence. Suddenly, a roar of thunder rolls across the mountains. It is the sound of wooden drums played by master necromancer Huaba Mang. The wooden drum is usually hidden, and only used during the Guzang Festival. Then a mysterious restlessness seizes the village. The necromancer assistants quickly rise, holding resin candles and carving knives, and disappear into the depth of the night that is echoing with the rumbling of drums. They will be very busy tonight, chanting prayers and carrying out divination by the bullhorns, calling the ancestors of each family. Master Huaba Mang has a full schedule, because of his extensive powers in raising all the ancestors' spirits, he must call on every family.

The Ancestors Come Home

The ninth day is for receiving guests, in which all households are busy preparing meat for feasts. Relatives and friends come from all over to join in the celebrations, carrying rice, firecrackers and rice wine, bringing chickens, ducks and pigs. The firecrackers to welcome

guests can be heard throughout the mountainous village. Old tradition dictates that guests must arrive before sunset. There are many rules for gift-giving: the closest and dearest, being the aunt's family, needs to give a cow, a bottle of wine, a basket of glutinous rice and a duck; the maternal uncle's family, also close relatives, must present a pig, two baskets of glutinous rice and unspecified numbers of ducks and

1. The Bull Keeper couple are the souls of the ceremony
2. The sacrificial offerings are all symbolic, with female and male horns representing the ancestors, while the seven servings of glutinous rice signify seven people in a family, the five dried fish on top represent three males and two females
3. A rooster stands high on the wooden drum, ready to make the call to the sacrificial ceremony
4. Each bull for the sacrifice has been carefully selected and enjoys special privileges. Before its death, it is bathed clean in the river



chickens. Young women walk the snaking mountain paths for miles to come to the festivities, carrying with them their best silver jewellery and intricately embroidered clothes in bamboo baskets. The songfest is a showcase for the women to flaunt their skills in embroidery and crochet. Each household is packed with almost a hundred people, and the event is a carnival of joy. Before dark, guests have arrived and scarecrows are erected at the village entrance — to seal the village. During the festival nobody can go in or out of the village to prevent the unwelcome ghosts from spoiling everyone's fun.

The households responsible for butchering bulls must put horns from previous festivals at their doors. Ancient rules say that the number of horns represents how many bulls will be killed.

The ninth is also the day for worshipping the "lusheng". "Lushengs" large and small fill the house of the Bull Keeper, and the tuner tunes them all, one by one.

On the afternoon of the 10th day, three loud bangs from cannons shatter the peace, and on the vacant lot next to the home of the Bull



Keeper, the lead spiritual dancer, Yu Gujiao, makes his appearance. He is best at the ancient dancing that accompanies the eating of the sieve rice, spinning the bull, and the lusheng dance. It is said that these ceremonies can evoke the spirits of the ancestors.

Nugabang and Spinning the Bulls

The 11 day is "Nugabang", or the day for "rice giving". After noon, the entire village carries the sieves of rice, led by Huaba Mang, Yu Gujiao, the necromancer assistants and the lusheng band, they form a queue to proceed to the bull ground holding their bullhorn wine cups. The line-up circles the spinning ground three times, signifying respect for the ancestors' arrival. The village elder then announces that in groups of ten, everyone can start to feast on the rice.

A total of 140 servings of rice are placed neatly in the fields, as if a grand banquet is being held in the great outdoors. The men hold bullhorns of wine and drink to their hearts' content, while Miao women in stunning dress begin to dance accompanied by the music of the lusheng. The women's dresses also carry totem signs of the ancestors, a tree full in bloom, with a long-tailed silver bird that appears to dance up and down with the movement of the women's bodies. The moon rises from behind the mountain and old songs can be heard from the Miao houses, young men and women dance the lusheng dance next to the wells.

The 13th, a bright sunny day, is the day of bull spinning. The village elder holds a "bull list" in his hand and divides the 69 bulls into 10 groups, then the bull spinning starts.

At the same time the lusheng dance kicks off, firecrackers sound in all directions, the



deafening sound and thick smoke cover the crowds at the grounds.

After spinning around a few times, the bulls calm down gradually, a man puts two silver neck rings on their horns and ties the rings together with a green and white headband, symbolizing the gifting of the bull to the forefathers. Some people smear mud on the backs of the bulls and throw a handful of rice on the mud. It is said that the bulls may be afraid to walk and the mud can give the animals courage, so they can walk all the way to the east and return to the homes of the ancestors.

Everything proceeds according to thousand-year-old traditions. Every part of the ceremony is revered and everyone follows tradition to the letter. At the same time, it is almost a free-for-all game that embodies humour and wit, with its casualness. The people of Jiaqu feel the palpable existence of their ancestors and communicate with their spirits. It is an occasion that allows them to express their own fears of death, disease, disasters and adversity, to articulate their respect, affection for their ancestors and their hope to be blessed by them.



1. Before the "rice-giving" ceremony, three circles around the yard must be made to invite the ancestors to share the feast
2. The families that have killed bulls carry out cooked meat and rice in large bamboo sieves to share among family and friends
3. Yu Gujiao is the main spiritual master for the mountain-worshipping, lusheng (bamboo pipe) music, and bull spinning ceremonies, and through the ancient dance he calls the spirits of the ancestors
4. Families that have killed bulls solemnly bring the sacrificed animals to the Bull-spinning Ground



Preparing to Slaughter the Bulls

Prior to the days of bull-spinning, the uncles in the bull killing families go into the mountains to chop maple trees in order to make a stake, when it is time to kill the bull, its head will be bound to the stake. The stake must be made of maple because of the Miaos' reverence for the Maple Mother. After finding a suitable maple tree, they tie a dried fish to the tree and shout "Oh-ha, ancestor, we're going to kill the bull!" Then after chanting prayers, the tree is felled.

Those bulls to be sacrificed to the ancestors bathe at the well and enjoy a meal of tender grass and porridge. Already their red-rimmed eyes seem to be filled with sadness, as if they are aware of their destiny.

It is already the latter half of the night, but Bull Keeper Yu Laoni and his wife are still awake. They are still sitting solemnly with their hands on knees beside the fireplace and have been there for five days and nights. Fifteen necromancers' assistants sit around each holding their own religious instruments. Master Huaba Mang's head is covered with dried fish, presents from various households he's helped to worship the ghosts. His eyes have a faraway look, as if staring through time to another world.

These people with their sacred duties are anxiously awaiting the coming of the sacred moment.

A red-necked cockerel stands high on the wooden drum, watching over the spectacle with a turn of its head from time to time. The rooster will play an important role in the actual sacrifice.

Stopping the Bull's Complaints

Everything is still in the darkness.

Suddenly, a shrill rooster's crow breaks the darkness. It is the hour of Mao (around 5~7 a.m.), time for the bull killing.

The people waiting at the home of the Bull Keeper, suddenly leap from the ground and hurry to the bull enclosure. Dragging the bull into the yard, under the cold glow of the moon, the animal's head is bound



tightly to the wooden stake. As if realizing his fate, the bull does not put up a struggle and lets himself be tied. The uncle in Bull Keeper Yu Laoni's family holds the sharp axe high and strikes three times, making a dull sound. Blood flows from the bull's head and the animal falls without a sound. The three axe cuts are clean and brisk, considered a lucky sign. Bending down, the uncle pulls out the tongue of the bull that has been sacrificed and pierces it with a bamboo skewer to stop the bull complaining to the ancestors.

The family members quickly take out a bright red quilt to cover the bull and hide its wound with maple branches and leaves, so that the bull's soul can now return to the ancestor's homes....

Just at the moment Yu's bull is beheaded, firecrackers sound. In the tranquillity of the night, the explosions ring loud and clear throughout the Moon Mountain. In quick succession, 69 bulls in the upper and lower villages of Jiaqu all fall to the same fate in the short time of 12 minutes.

Morning has come, the golden sun shines gloriously on the roofs and yards of the Jiaqu people.

All guests from other villages are given beef, while the best parts, including the offal and the meat below the neck, are given to the head necromancer and his assistants. The uncle and the aunt get the hind quarters with tail attached. The bull's head is offered to those families



who can't afford to kill their own. "We are all descendants of the same ancestor," they say, so everyone shares in the fortunes of the ancestor. The piece of hide from the bull's neck is boiled into jelly, which will come in handy for the women in their dyeing work. Fabric dyed with the jelly will have a purple sheen and become stronger.

The third day after the butchering of the bulls is the ceremony to send them away. The sky is pale with drizzle and the village is enshrouded by dense fog, houses and trees all appear somewhat unreal. The bull heads have been laid out in a row, looking eastward in a layout signifying power. The bull belonging to Bull Keeper Yu Laoni has the prime position.

For this ceremony, the upper village of Jiaqu killed 40 bulls, while the lower village killed 29, in total 69 bulls. The head necromancer Huaba Mang has poured twelve cups of wine to place on the altar and chants a mantra for each bull telling it where to go. Then he says "Be on your way" and the souls of the bulls go to the ancestors along the instructed paths. Then, people cut off the bull noses to take home, these will be offered up to the ancestors when the planting season begins the next year.

After Jiaqu Village, Babei Village takes the flag for the next bull eating.

In the planting season of the second year, we returned to Jiaqu. The fields where the rice-giving ceremony was held are now covered with lush green paddy seedlings. A woman tending the rice says happily, "It's going to be a great year. Look how strong the seedlings are!"



The yard where the bulls were butchered is overgrown with grass. Where the stake was and the bull killed, now stands a great tall cement power pole. Not only does Jiaqu now have electric lights, but also television.

Translated by Cheng Lei

1. With the fall of the bull, begins the singing of the ban-breaking song, calling the spirits and souls of their ancestors
2. Only a "di" (stake made from maple) can hold the immensely strong bull
3. The families that have butchered bulls chop the meat into pieces and give it to friends and family

GUZANG FESTIVAL TRAVEL TIPS

◆ **Place/ Date:** The Miao regions in southwestern Guizhou Province all have Guzang festivals, each one held by a different village once every 13 years, but because the exact format, timing and years in between are all different, it is not easy to plan ahead. The many towns around Moon Mountain of Rongjiang County, such as Xinghua, Jihua, Dingwei, because of the tall mountains and dense forests, lack of transport and outside contact, have kept their Guzang festivals original and unaffected by modern tampering. It's recommended to make enquiries with the Rongjiang County Tourism Bureau about the times and venues for the festival. Tel: (855) 662347

◆ **Transportation:** From Guiyang, daily sleeper buses go straight to Rongjiang County, departing at 9 a.m. Fare: 40 yuan, it takes more than a day. Or you could take air-conditioned buses to Kaili, which depart half-hourly and take 2.5 hours. Fare: 35 yuan. After seeing the sights and staying a night in Kaili, you can take the bus to Rongjiang which departs four times a day, the times of departure are: 8 a.m., 11 a.m., 2 p.m., 4 p.m., sleepers cost 30 yuan, normal buses cost 15~20 yuan. From Rongjiang County, buses can be taken to Dingwei, Xinghua and Jihua townships. For safety's sake, car-hire can also be an option. Because there are no roads from towns to villages, be prepared to walk for at least an hour in mountainous terrain.

◆ Accommodation:

Kaili: Kaili Hotel (2 star) 80~320 yuan/ room; Yinpanpo Nationality Hotel (2 star) 80~260 yuan/ room; Guotai Hotel (2 star) 168~380 yuan/ room; Lantian Hotel 120~280 yuan/ room; normal reception centres 10~30 yuan/ bed;

Rongjiang: Rongjiang Hotel, Qingfeng Hotel, Wurong Hotel, Lantian Hotel, rates are 60~180 yuan/ room

Townships and villages: The towns usually have local government reception centres that offer accommodation, but in the villages, visitors can stay with villagers or at the village school. Sleeping bags are recommended just in case.

◆ **Equipment:** Rain is frequent in Guizhou, so wet weather gear is recommended. Travelling to the village in the rain requires a pair of good anti-slip shoes because the roads can be muddy and slippery. If you forget, a pair of liberate army shoes with rubber nails under the soles can be purchased for less than 20 yuan in the town centre of Rongjiang County. Also, bring enough snacks, convenience food and drinking water in case you are unaccustomed to the strange local fare. If you can bring some small gifts like candy, biscuits, combs, etc. to give to villagers and children, your popularity will rocket.



Climbing the Highest Peak in Northeast Asia

TAIWAN'S YUSHAN MOUNTAINS

Photos by Zhu Jianhui, He Yanguang Article by Zhu Jianhui

A few months have elapsed since I returned from Taiwan. At home, I often make a cup of Wulong tea that I brought back from the high mountains on the other side of the sea, and savour it as I recall my journey to the Yushan Mountains in Taiwan.

Maybe because I have been close to mountains since my childhood, I have a special love of them. I was surprised to learn that I had a chance to go to Taiwan; and I was wild with joy when I had an opportunity to climb the Yushan, or Jade Mountains.

A Cup of Coffee on the Mountain

When we started climbing the mountain, we had three guides: "Loach", "Bitter Gourd", and "Forget Worries Grass". The backpack of each guide was much larger than that of any member in our group. "Oh, it is too much," we scoffed. "We aren't climbing Mount Qomolangma or Shisha Pangma Peak."

The roads were dangerously steep, with sheer precipices on one side and overhanging rocks on the other. Under the bright sunshine, the mountain was very picturesque under the blue

1. Mt. Yushan, standing 3,953 metres above sea level, is the highest peak in Northeast Asia (by Zhu Jianhui)
2. One careless step could mean the difference between life and death (by He Yanguang)
3. Only one person is allowed to pass this rocky trail at a time (by He Yanguang)



About Yushan Mountains

Taiwan has four major mountains. The Snow Mountains in the north, the Central Mountains in the middle, and the Yushan and Alishan mountains in the south. Of them, the Yushan Mountains are the highest, their main peak being 3,953 metres above sea level. The main peak and the four peaks in the east, west, south and north form a "cross," presenting a magnificent sight. In winter, the mountains are covered with white snow, which is as pure and spotless as jade. Hence the name.

The Yushan Mountains, known for having the highest peak in Northeast Asia, present different scenes in the four seasons. Now it is covered by white snow, and now by green trees. Except for winter, tourists may come to climb the mountain in the other three seasons.



skies and white clouds, with high peaks, ancient trees and green grasses.

We stopped at a wooden pavilion on the mountain for a break. "Loach" had already set up a stove in the pavilion, preparing to boil

water for coffee. We had not expected that we could even drink coffee in the high mountains. Taking a cup of strong coffee in the open air made us feel extremely refreshed.

A Sea of Clouds at Paiyun Mountain Villa

After our coffee break, we continued climbing. The paths became more dangerous. The closer we were to the top, the steeper the paths became. There were no paths at all in many places, with only a flight of steps made of withered trees lying on the ground. Sometimes we had to climb over huge rocks that had come down in landslides. It became a very arduous journey, because a step forward required painstaking effort, with our hearts beating madly.

"Bitter Gourd" followed us closely. Finally I had to take some of my goods out from my backpack and put them into his.

After more than eight hours' climbing, we eventually came to Paiyun Mountain Villa, which is not far from the top. I could not go any further. Suddenly we heard happy cheers from a dense forest not far away. Climbing the slope, we caught a wonderful sight — a sea of clouds moving into the distance, one on top of another. The clouds and mist were like girls trying on garments in front of a mirror. It is true that "on perilous peaks dwells Beauty in her infinite variety".

At night, all the members of the tourist group, men and women, old and young, stayed in one big room.

Climbing the Mountain in the Wind

At two o'clock in the morning, the guides woke us, and served ginger soup. After this breakfast, we walked out of the room, finding the cold wind chilled us to the bone.

Everyone in our group wore a headlamp. An S-shaped procession walked in the mountains in a pitch-dark night. It became light gradually, and we arrived at a place of draught, which is only one kilometre from the summit. The name matches the reality well. It was blowing a force six to seven wind. I was worried that I would be whipped off the mountain by the strong wind.

I saw clearly that on the bare rocks extending one kilometre along, there were steel posts one metre apart, linked by steel cables, leading to the summit. There was no road underfoot. We had to tightly grasp the steel cables to go up. At this moment, I recalled the old saying: "One single slip may cause eternal sorrow."

Scrambling on hands and feet, I finally reached the top. Instead of being excited, I felt cold, hoping to find shelter from the wind. I found "Loach" standing by me, carrying a kettle of coffee and a paper cup. I drank four cups of hot coffee at one go, feeling it warm my body and soul. Thanks to the friendship of the guides, my stiff limbs could move flexibly as if they had been lubricated with oil.

The clouds were lingering on the horizon, keeping out the sun with its shimmering rays. Standing on the mountaintop, I had a nice view of peaks rising one higher than another, sheer precipices, overhanging rocks and slopes with crushed stones.

I had a picture taken in front of the main peak tablet, indicating that the Yushan Mountains are 3,953.72 metres high. For the first time I got a certificate for climbing a

mountain—the Certificate of Climbing the Yushan Mountains.

Before we left Taiwan for Beijing, thoughts suddenly came to mind: different mountains had been conquered by different people, and different people had different stories, which had linked people across the Taiwan Strait. Confucius said; "Man's nature is good at birth, they are born about the same, but habits make them differ." I thought that if people were born about the same and the habits were close, they must have something in common and they wouldn't feel strange wherever they went or whenever they met.

Now, whenever I taste the Wulong tea I brought from the high mountain in Taiwan, my thoughts drift to the other side of the strait....

Translated by Kuang Peihua



1. The route leading to the peak is extremely hard, with a steel post every metre connected by a steel cable to the top of the mountain (by Zhu Jianhui)
2. Visitors walk under a metal cover protected from rock falls (by Zhu Jianhui)
3. Climbers walking on a bridge built with huge steel frames (by He Yanguang)
4. Enjoying a cup of hot, fragrant coffee on the mountain (by Zhu Jianhui)
5. Bright smiles are the best reward for an arduous trip (by Zhu Jianhui)



Travel Tips

◆ **Transport:** There are scheduled flights from Hong Kong to Taipei or Kaohsiung everyday. In Taipei or Kaohsiung, you may go to Chiayi by train. At the Chiayi Bus Station, you can get on a bus and go to the Alishan Mountains, then go to the Yushan Tatajia Tourism Centre by taxi or minibus.

◆ **Mountain-Climbing License/ Park Entry License:** Before climbing a high mountain with an elevation of over 3,000 metres, you must apply for a mountain climbing license from the Security Office of the Police and Politics Bureau or from the Security Office of the Local Police Station on the strength of a mountain-climbing plan and a licensed guide. Security Office of the Police and Politics Bureau: Tel. (886) 2-23514781; Taipei Mountain-Climbing Application Department of the Police and Politics Bureau: Tel. (886) 2-3577377; Security Office of the Police Team of the Yushan National Park: Tel. (886) 49-2773121. In addition, as the tourist route from Tatajia Mountain-Climbing Entrance to

the Main Peak passes through the ecological protection zone of the Yushan National Park, tourists should apply for entry permits from the Security Office of the Administration Department of the Yushan National Park seven days before. Please get detailed information from the website of the Administration Department of the Yushan National Park as follows: <http://www.ysnp.gov.tw>

◆ **Accommodation:** In general, climbing the Yushan Mountains needs two days and one night, and tourists spend the night at Paiyun Mountain Villa. With limited guestrooms, Paiyun Mountain Villa is often full on holidays, so a reservation is advised. From the first day of every month, tourists may make reservations for hotel rooms of the next month. Paiyun Mountain Villa: Tel. (886) 5-2679917.

◆ **Inquiry:** Administration Department of the Yushan National Park
Tel: (886) 49-2774300 Fax: (886) 49-2775466

Snapping the Red-Crowned Cranes

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin

During the autumn two years ago, I went to the Zhalong Nature Reserve, in Heilongjiang Province, where I got very close to the red-crowned cranes (or Japanese crane, *Grus japonensis*). I fell in love at first sight with the migratory bird. Living in shallow lakes and wetlands, with elegant postures, they were as beautiful as fairy maidens. I could not keep my eyes off from them. However, because of my limited time, I could only stay with them half a day. I felt reluctant to leave after taking pictures of them. I made up my mind to make a return visit to this "immortal bird" after realizing that the red-crowned cranes are the most photogenic of creatures.

▼ Every winter, photographers flock to the wetland habitat of the Japanese cranes in Hokkaido



Finally I had a chance to go to Hokkaido, Japan, another "holy land" for red-crowned cranes, where I took pictures for several days. Though I dare not say that I came back with fruitful results, the experience still thrills me and I never miss a chance to share the pleasure of these birds.

Getting Your Camera Ready

An auspicious bird in Japan, the red-crowned crane is well protected there. A red-crowned crane nature reserve has been established in Kushiro City, Hokkido. As the cranes live in the open wetland, people have difficulty getting close to them. Without a super-long-focus lens, the photographer cannot take excellent photos. So before setting out, you must prepare some unconventional photographic equipment.

The most suitable camera is a 135-single-lens reflector camera, with a lens of over 400 mm. I brought two lenses — a 70~200 mm/ F2.8 IS, and a 300 mm/ F4 IS — plus a 2x focus increasing lens, which can be as long as 600/ F8 at maximum, but it fell short when taking



pictures of red-crowned cranes. In my experience, the best photographic equipment for taking pictures of red-crowned cranes is as follows:

Telescope: Two 135 mm telephoto lenses are needed. One should be equipped with a 100-400 mm/F4-5.6 1:5 zoom lens, to be held by a hand, and the other is a 300 mm/F2.8 telephoto lens + 2x lens. The two pieces on the tripod will be better if you have a long-focus lens of 600 mm/F4. However, the lens will be heavy and bulky.

Camera: A 1/3 cc and equipped with a battery-shaped camera will be more convenient for moving the lens at any time to take pictures of flying birds.

Outfitter: The weather is very cold, usually minus 10°C or lower, and the cranes will be very noisy. So you should prepare warm clothes of various types, 1 pair of shoes with 30 mm of fur by using AA batteries, 8 pairs of socks at a time, and the better the level of Japanese tea, the

Tea: Those taken in the snow-covered land will take on a bluish color. Those who take photos must bring a 181 A or B film to shoot the cranes. Though I brought the film with me, I did not use them much.



▲ Dancing in the snow

was forced to change them. I took a lot of the power film, and I used a lot.

Precautions: Before the crane feeding season, which can be found in the cranes, so many birds are in the water. I was very careful. The following are useful and I can tell you and want to protect your health and New Year's Day today.

▼ A family of three



▲ Flying



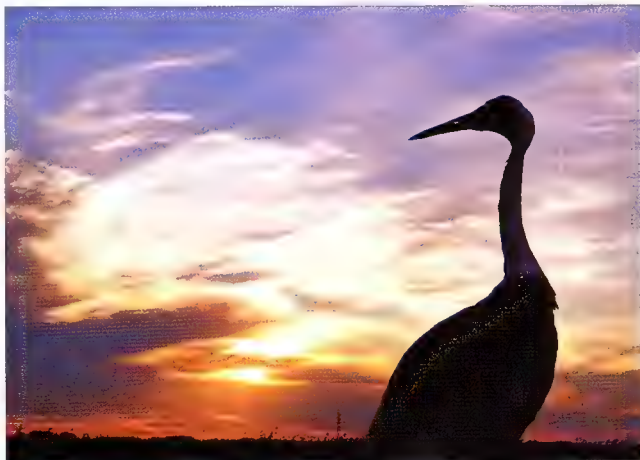
▲ Dancing



▲ Standing

Practical Experience

Act according to circumstances: Usually, a pair of cranes and their offspring stay together. But they also live in groups. The best places for taking pictures are the feeding grounds in the nature reserve, where many cranes gather to eat. Moreover cranes are not afraid of people, so photographers can go close, but must stay behind the fences. In the morning and afternoon when food is offered, the cranes are very active, and good pictures may be had. Before food is spread on the ground, cranes come from all directions. After feeding, they frolic with each other before flying away. It is the best time to take pictures. When taking photos of flying birds, it is better to use a zoom



▲ Waiting at dusk

(Taken at Zhalong in Heilongjiang Province. Lens: 17~35mm/F2.8
Time: 1/30 second Aperture: 5.6 Slide: ISO50)

zone lens, and a 100~400 mm lens is the best choice. The camera should be regulated on the continuous focus spot; otherwise you may fail to focus quickly enough. More often than not, when continuous focus does not work, you must regulate the focal length by hand.

Taking pictures of red-crowned cranes eating, singing and dancing, you may use the long-focus lens on the tripod, aim steadily and catch the best moments. If you have a friend who does not take pictures to warn you of the coming of cranes, you may also use a hand-held camera to take pictures of flying birds.

Setting the shutter: When you take pictures of moving cranes, the speed of the shutter should not be slower than 1/125 second, otherwise the images will be blurred. When taking pictures of flying birds, it is better to set your camera on the continuous shooting position.

Testing the light: As the snow-covered land and the feathers of cranes are all white, the camera may incorrectly determine the light, possibly resulting in insufficient exposure. Adjust the exposure on the basis of the light reading. In general, about one grade should be added.

Reference information: For shooting flying red-crowned cranes: Lens: 70~200 mm/ F2.8 with a 2x focus increasing lens; Time: 1/250 second; Aperture: 8; Slide: ISO100. Tips: Follow the bird when shooting. For shooting red-crowned cranes on the ground: Lens: 300 mm/ F4 or 70~200 mm/ F2.8 with 2x distance-adding lens; Time: 1/125 second; Aperture: 11~16. Since the cranes on the ground will gain more light from the reflection off the snow, an ISO50 slide would be enough for the photographing.



▲ "Fairy maidens" in a heaven on earth

on the
Way

24 Tales of Feicheng

Photos & article by Huang Yanhong





In Ejin Banner, in the most western part of Inner Mongolia, there is a border town that has fell into oblivion centuries ago. It is Heicheng (Black City), known as Hala-Haute in Mogolian.

In 1226, this strongly fortified city was captured by Genghis Khan, founder of the Yuan Dynasty (1279—1368). In 1372, General Feng Sheng led the Ming army to attack Heicheng. It is said that he couldn't capture the city despite repeated attacks. Then he gave the order to change the course of the river and thus cut off its water source. Heicheng soon fell to the Ming army and became deathly silent.

Today, life has come again to this lonely city in the desert, with an endless flow of scholars, photographers and tourists. The renowned Chinese scholar, Yu Qiuyu (1946~?), once said, "Most of the old castles in the world belong to war, but one in a hundred can be noted in history, one in a thousand can become tourist sites, and one in ten thousand can sparkle with poetic inspiration." To me, Heicheng belongs to the third kind.

Once Glorious Heicheng

As Heicheng is located in Ejin Gobi, in the

most western part of Inner Mongolia, it is not easy to go there. I tried many ways in Dalai-Hubu Town, but couldn't find any bus there. Finally, hitchhiking was the only way.

During the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.—220), the biggest threat to the central regime was the Huns (an ancient nationality in China). So a large number of

1. Heicheng in Ejin Banner was called Juyan in ancient times. More than 400 relic places, including residences, Buddhist pagodas, group tombs, and military facilities, have become tourist sites
2. The mosque located outside Heicheng city wall was built for Persian businessmen
3. The ruins of Heicheng in the setting sun look more desolate and weather-beaten through the ages





troops were stationed in Ejin (called Juyan in ancient times). The soldiers built beacon towers and fortresses and began to cultivate the frontier areas, thus the earliest army production corps was formed.

As to when Heicheng was built, some scholars believe it dated back to the Han Dynasty, while many others say it was built during the Western Xia Dynasty (1038—1227). By all accounts, it was the most important border town of the Western Xia regime and the Yuan Dynasty. Heishan Weifu military command was set up as one of the 12 military areas of the Western Xia regime, used mainly to resist the Huns in Mobei area. Its almost impregnable city walls were breached by Genghis Khan and his men in 1226. But in 1372, when General Feng Sheng led the Ming troops to attack it, they simply couldn't break in. So General Feng ordered the course of the river to be changed, cutting off the city's water source. Finally Heicheng collapsed.

The historic tragedy was caused by an eco-disaster. A blockage in the river brought about the ruin of the city as nature had the final decision on the city's fate. In later years, the inhospitable climate and abrasion of the elements finally killed Heicheng.

Stepping on the sand dunes, I climbed on the tall city wall. More sand dunes led me down into the city. Years of erosion by the sand and wind have rounded all the edges and corners of the city wall. Sand dunes begin to form far from the walls and gradually rise up to the ramparts until, finally, the ancient city

walls and the surrounding sand dunes become one integrated mass — a huge sculpture of sand.

There is a dry well at the northwestern part of Heicheng. Legend has it that it was dug by Hala-Bater, a general defending the besieged city. Not a single drop of water appeared even though it was as deep as 250 metres. Extremely hungry and thirsty, people waited by the well, praying for a miracle that never came. In sheer despair, Hala-Bater, buried all his treasures, together with his son and daughter, in the well. I tried to imagine the sad scene: the angst-ridden general trying to survive the torture of thirst with all his courage and might.

That moment under the scorching sun, neighs of the horses were echoed by shouts of the soldiers outside the city wall. Panic-stricken city residents packed their valuables and prepared to escape. The defending soldiers bid their final adieu to their families and threw themselves into a decisive battle. They dug open the northern wall. Hala-Bater, wielding a long sword, led his remaining troops toward the besieging enemy. Finally, the general and his men all died in battle in the desert.

The history of Heicheng stopped at that moment. The city died out, all creatures ceased to live. But the hole is still there, in the northwestern corner of the wall, after witnessing the soldiers, in sheer hunger and thirst, dashing out and charging toward their deaths. It bore testimony to the last, most tragic scene of Heicheng. Totally heart-breaking.

The Last Resident in the Lonely City

A 73-year-old man responsible for taking tickets at Heicheng's entrance is the only resident in the ruined city. He is known as "Mayor Wang."

I asked Mr. Wang, "May I put up at your home for a night?" He readily agreed.

His home is located outside the city wall. The rather disorderly yurt includes a big iron stove, a small dining table, and a small multi-functional dough press — a gift that he almost never used. A double-deck wooden shelf was full of sundries.

At dusk I sat with Mr. Wang in the yurt, listening to his stories. "Why am I single? This is fate. I began to look for a girlfriend when I was 23. I've seen many women, but none could be mine, no luck. Do I smoke? I used to, but gave up after I found God. God says that it is not good to smoke. I used to drink too, and half a litre of liquor is nothing to me. But God told us not to drink, and I quit that too. Why believe in God? That's fate too. I had something wrong with my legs years ago. They hurt in winter. After I prayed, the pain was gone. How do I spend the evenings? I listen to the radio. I like to hear the series of the Bible on the radio, which starts every evening at 8 p.m. Two days ago, when the series came to the moment Jesus was nailed to the cross, the Virgin Mary cried, and I cried with her. Yesterday it was even more heart-stirring. Jesus was dead, but the soldier stabbed him with a spear. I was so sad..." Mr.

Wang choked with sobs.

"I don't have to buy any batteries. It's very easy to find some discarded by tourists. I put them in my radio and they all work. Some even last for a month." He talked on and off. When it was time to pray, he took off his cap, blew out the candle and, kneeling down on his bed, began to pray, "God, hallelujah..." Counting with his fingers, he chanted 30 times. Then he began to enumerate his sins, begging God to forgive him.

The Ghosts of Heicheng

I told him I would sleep on the ground. He then took out his mattress from his bed and placed it on the dusty ground. I slipped into the borrowed sleeping bag, with a cupboard on one side and the warm iron stove on the other.

I asked him: "People said that you are very brave and have seen many ghosts." He said proudly, "There were three young men

here before me. As there are often ghostly sounds at night, the men were all scared away after no more than a month here." The ghosts he saw were mostly light or fire. A strange light followed him for quite a few years. It had flames and would float and burn for hours in the air at night. For a man of his age, such a sight, even if a mere illusion, was a rather strange phenomenon.

"One night, a car came late at night. Its lights were so bright, but I just couldn't see the car, neither could I hear it. On seeing me, it turned away. I thought it was a grave robber. The next day, I looked around, but there were no car tracks in the sand. The other day a strange light drew me to the desert, but suddenly it went out. I cried out for help and the light reappeared, leading me to back to a safe place."

I simply couldn't go to sleep, either

because of the ghost stories or the tragedy of this ancient city. I looked at my watch. It was midnight. So I got up and went to experience the city in the dark.

Mr. Wang asked, "Where are you going?"

I replied, "I couldn't sleep. Just taking a walk outside to see the moon."

The moon looked very big, hanging cold and high above the dark city. I walked quietly on to the wall. A cold breeze made my flesh creep. I hesitated a little, but boosted my courage and ran down the wall. I stood in the

1. The only well in Heicheng is outside the city wall. Mr. Wang comes to fetch water everyday
2. Mr. Wang awaits tourists at Heicheng entrance every morning
3. There are a dozen temples of various kinds in Heichang — proof of the once-strong religious culture. Buddhism was obviously the most predominant, as Buddhist temples occupy the central place in the city





middle of the empty ruined city, feeling totally different from the day. The broken old walls were bathed in the moonlight. In the southwestern corner white pagodas glowed bleakly. The sandy ground was full of shadows of motley shapes, with a chill wind whistling overhead. Before I had come, Li Jing of the Banner Archives told me that the locals believed there were ghosts in Heicheng, as so many people had died there without being buried. In the past 700 years, whenever there was anything strange, people

would say it was the work of ghosts. Actually the typical ghost sounds were made by the wind passing through the holes and gaps in the wall. But standing alone late at night surrounded by ruined walls would make anyone shudder.

The Plunder of the Graves

Water is the dominating force in the wild Gobi Desert. Over 600 years ago, Heicheng fell without water. Early next morning, I followed Mr. Wang to fetch water. He hung a pair of buckets on the back seat of his bike, one plastic and the other, the iron sort often carried by camels. "Is it far?" I asked. He replied, "No, only 380 steps away."

The well was in a patch of low sand, its mouth covered by a stone. The rope was tied by the well. On one end of the rope there was a small bucket. I asked how deep, and he answered "9.6 metres." I was again surprised at his accuracy.

Right next to the well lay the ancient river course. In 1372, it was here that General Feng Sheng blocked the river, which led to the ruin of Heicheng.

Not far from the well is a dagoba with a big hole in its body. Mr. Wang said the hole was dug by a Russian named Peter Kuzmich Kozlov who stole many treasures from the dagoba. In 1908 when he and his expedition team passed Ejin, he heard the story of Heicheng. Then he bribed the local lord with money and guns, and was able to excavate a large amount of scriptures and Buddhist

figures, and carried 10 full cases back to Russia. The Russian Geographic Society was astonished by these relics. So Peter Kozlov was sent immediately back to Heicheng for further excavations.

It was not fruitful at first. Later, he accidentally found "the splendid Buddhist dagoba on the right bank of the river 400 metres west of the city wall". The treasures preserved there were astonishing. After nine days of illicit excavation, Peter Kozlov and his team members stole 24,000 volumes of books of the Western Xia regime, more than 300 "excellent" Buddhist paintings, and a large quantity of carved wooden slabs and incomplete bamboo slips. They "carried back a well-preserved library" on 40 camels.

Looking at the pagoda, I found that its location was the same as recorded, but was much shorter. It is hard to imagine so many treasures were once preserved here. It is said that there is a site at the northwestern part of Heicheng where Hala-bater buried his treasures. Hearing this, Peter Kozlov found some locals to dig the site and when it was fairly deep, he let his men continue the digging. Suddenly, a strong gust of miasma erupted from below and two men were poisoned to death on the spot. Peter Kozlov had to give up and no one else ever dared to dig the site again.

The city walls of Heicheng were built twice: once in the Western Xia period and again in the Yuan Dynasty. The outer wall was added in the Yuan Dynasty, 421 metres from east to west and 374 metres from south to north. The 10-metre-high earthen wall was solidly built. Outside the wall there was once a stable wall, but it has been mostly destroyed by wind and sand. Only a small section of it can be seen outside the southern wall. Yet it is a great pity that the remnant Yangma Wall has now become littered with the garbage of tourists.

There are 19 protruding bastions built at intervals along the city wall. In addition to fortifying the ramparts, they make it easier for defenders to shoot in crossfire at the invaders.



The two city gates are purposely built on different lines to prevent the enemy from driving straight in. The inner wall built by the Western Xia regime is in the northeast, much smaller than the Yuan Dynasty wall, with each of the four sides about 238 metres. Mr. Fu said, pointing at the inner wall, that after the expansion of the Yuan Dynasty, the old city wall of the Western Xia regime became the back wall of local people's homes.

There are also many religious sites. The highest tower in the city centre is the Temple of the Giant Buddha. Next to it is a pagoda, built during the Western Xia Dynasty with the lotus base and thin adobe bricks popular during that period. The ruins of a medium-sized Buddhist temple in the north are marked by faded incomplete ramparts. Between the adobe bricks can be found many interspaces through which the sunlight casts many bright spots on the ground. According to documents unearthed there, Heicheng had

a dozen temples in its heyday, such as the Buddha Temple and Taihei Hall, when Buddhism prevailed here.

Historic Ruins Everywhere

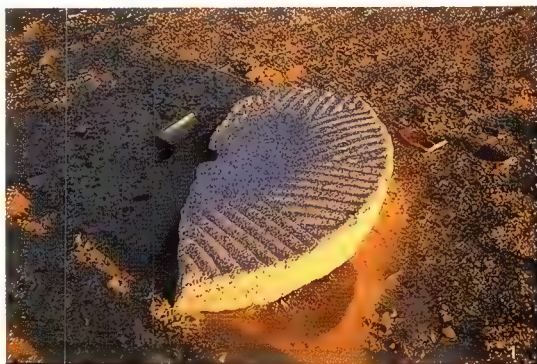
Among the ruins that can be identified, there is official residence of the supervisor-in-chief, barracks, warehouses, streets, residential houses, and commercial streets with stores, small workshops and taverns. Li Jing said that about 300 rooms have been excavated; bills used in those years were found in the business streets, including some "advertisements" written over 700 years ago.

Debris of broken tiles, porcelain and bricks can be seen everywhere between the remaining ramparts. I was greatly surprised when Mr. Fu told me that these broken bricks are all very valuable. The local people took them home, wrapped them up after heating, and used them to cure hemorrhoids. The older the bricks, the more effective.

Mr. Fu said, pointing at broken millstones on the ground, that there used to be some complete millstones, which were all carried home on ox carts by local people to mill flour. Walking on the ruins, I felt that under every step there was something related to death, as scattered on the ground were fragments of bones, both animal and human. Li Jing and Mr. Fu were classmates. When they were at

1. The expedition team led by Peter Kozlov found Heicheng in Ejin on their way from Mogolia to Sichuan
2. Peter Kozlov was a Russian explorer in central Asia. His explorations covered the Yellow River and Yangtse River basins in China, the Mekong River basin in Vietnam, and the Ulan Bator area in Mongolia
3. The route of the Russian exploration team from Mongolia to Sichuan. Place 1 is Lake Sogo Nur in Ejin
4. Peter Kozlov bribed the Mongolian lord, Badeng-Zhasatetu for information and help in finding Heicheng
5. Camels are an important means of transportation in Ejin area, but their numbers are dwindling owing to the deteriorating ecological environment





middle school, they came to play at Heicheng and uncovered a complete skeleton from a sand dune. They then buried it again with

sand. When they grew up, they both became cultural relics workers. Then they realized that the skeleton might be a soldier who died in the battle of Heicheng. They came back several times to look for it but failed. It must have been buried deep in the sand.

It was at dusk when we came to bid goodbye to Mr. Wang. "We'll be off now, Mayor Wang," Li Jing said loudly. All the tourists had left before we drove away.

Mr. Wang was alone again. The ruined city resumed its serenity that had lasted for centuries.

The sunset glow tinted the ramparts red. Dark shadows became longer and longer on the sand dunes and the ruined city walls. Far in the distance, camels were moving, probably searching for water and poplars to prepare for the winter.

Translated by L. Yu

1. Thousand-year-old broken millstones can be seen everywhere. Those left intact were taken home and are still used by the locals

Precious Relics at Heicheng

As Heicheng is located at the edge of a desert, the dry climate and lack of water have made it possible for the preservation of a large quantity of historic and cultural relics for a long time.

Large amounts of historical and cultural relics from Heicheng are now scattered around the world, with the largest number in Russia. It is estimated that about 3,500 paintings, clay sculptures, wood carvings and bronze figures of Buddha, as well as some silk products are in the Oriental Studies Research Institute of the Russian Science Academy, and approximately 8,000 books and documents are in the State Hermitage Museum. These historic and cultural relics are extremely valuable for studying the history of the Western Xia regime. A Russian scholar once said excitedly of one of the relics, The Dictionary of Han and Western Xia Languages, has helped her to understand 700 volumes of books. Among these relics there are some Tibetan-style Tangkhas, such as those for Sakyamuni, Bodhisattva, and Bhaisajyaguru (Master of Healing). They are very important to the research of Buddhist art during the Western Xia regime and the studies of iconology of Tibetan Buddhism.



The Buddhist statue with twin heads is a perfect combination of religion and art.



The precious script chart of the Western Xia regime is now preserved in the Russian Oriental Research Institute



The Tangkha of Yellow Tara, one of the most exquisite art works of Tibetan Buddhism.



The Western Xia Tangkha of Guru, the Superior Master, is highly valued by archeologists



Tips for the Traveller:

Flight: It is necessary to fly from Hong Kong to Xi'an or Beijing first. The flight is available everyday. Both Xi'an and Beijing have flights to Ejin, twice a week.

Bus: Traffic to Ejin is very inconvenient. Almost no buses are available between tourist sites. Renting a car is recommended. Contact the local tourist bureau for help, or join a tour group.

Border pass: Ejin Banner is in the border area, so you need a border pass to go through Wuliji Inspection Station. Tourists should contact Ejin Tourist Bureau in advance. Tel: (3483) 6524483

Accommodation: Ejin Hotel~136 yuan/ room; Post and Telecommunications Hotel~150 yuan/ room; Xinhua Guest House~100 yuan/ room.

Admissions: A ticket for Guaishulin (Bewildering Forest), Hongcheng (Red City), Yita (Single Tower), Datongcheng (Datong City Wall) and Heicheng is altogether is 50 yuan.

The Shutterbug's Stuff

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin

In this day and age, you seldom see a traveller without a camera or video camera. The "shutterbug" travellers are those pros who travel for the photograph opportunities, or travellers who are fussy about their photographs, as well as amateurs with newly developed photo passions. In this case, a smart selection of good equipment and accessories which won't break the photographer's back is imperative.

Selection of Photographic Equipment

The Camera

Travel photography lends itself to on-the-road cameras, the most popular being the 135 single lens reflex camera, and its brother, the 135 range finder camera. The former can be matched with a number of accessories and has wide usage which makes it a trusty photographer's friend; but while the latter stands out with its light weight, its incompatibility with long-range and super-range zoom lenses (the maximum range zoom lens it takes is 90 mm) is a major restriction for photographers.

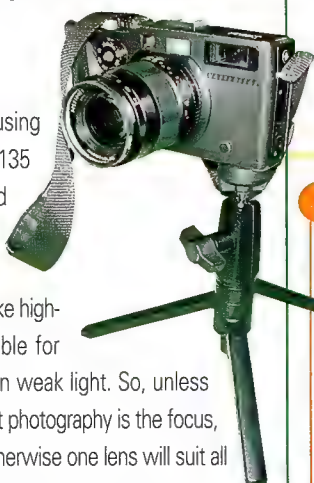
120 cameras are also favoured by travel photographers for their larger negative and better picture resolution, but they lose out in the weight department for being clunkier than the 135. The 120 camera also comes in single-lens-reflex and range finder versions, each with its own advantages and disadvantages just like the two types of 135 cameras.

The Lens

For 135 cameras, I recommend using wide-range zoom lenses, such as 24~135 mm, 28~200 mm, 28~300 mm and others. Why not, when one lens fits all? Of course, the maximum exposure for such lenses ranges from 3.5 to 5.6, unlike high-exposure lenses that are more suitable for shooting moving objects and people in weak light. So, unless you're travelling to places where portrait photography is the focus, you will need high-exposure lenses. Otherwise one lens will suit all purposes for scenic photography.

To discover the endless joys of the micro-world in nature, all you have to take is a small 50 mm close-up lens.

This tripod may be small, but can support a medium-format camera stably, and if height is needed the tripod can be set on a wall or tree. (Polaroid, approx. HK\$180) The camera on the tripod is a small panoramic model that offers special presence for scenery. (Hasselblad Xpan, camera and one lens, approx. HK\$11,000)



Anatomy of the Multi-purpose Rolling Backpack

The retractable handle and castors make it easy to pull along

Side adjustable loops can hold tripods or lenses

Can hold two 135 SLR cameras, one 120 RF camera, up to seven lenses ranging in size from 17~200 mm, there's also space for the flash and other accessories. (Lowepro, approx. HK\$1,900)

Adjustable shoulder straps

Packing It All In

For those who shoot on the move, the best camera bag is a backpack. When mountain-climbing and wading through water occupies both hands, a single strap bag is both tiring and leads you to lose your balance. Not so with a backpack, it's easy on the body and safe.

The writer sometimes uses a special camera bag with wheels and shoulder straps. The bag has a moveable soft padding inside that can cushion your equipment flexibly every time you travel. The castors take the stress out of lugging around 20 pounds of equipment, while the straps make it just as comfortable to carry when walking along winding paths or up mountains, this really is a blessing for hard working photographers.

A photographer's vest is also a godsend on the road. It keeps your wallet and cards close to you, while the numerous pockets can hold spare parts and films for easy retrieval, so it is like having an assistant.



This backpack-style camera bag can house two cameras, three lenses and a flash in its lower portion, the top part can hold clothes, and the tripod can be placed in the outside compartment. (Lowepro, approx. HK\$700)

Other Accessories

Decide on taking a tripod according to your itinerary. There is a highly user-friendly polycarbonate tripod that is lighter than normal metal versions by a third, but its price is double. If large tripods are too heavy, it is advised to take a small tripod in a bag just in case.

Worth a mention is a hiking walking stick, as the camera can be fitted on to the stick's handle, turning it into a tripod.

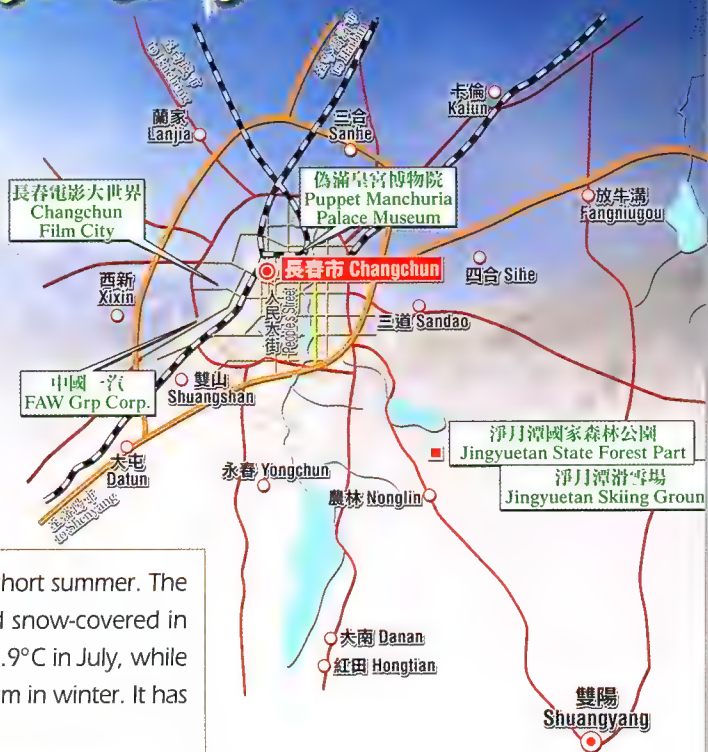
The choice of filter lenses depends on where you're travelling. For mountains and high-altitude plains, the 81 series amber (from light to dark there are A, B and C classes) filters work to reduce the slight blue caused by strong ultraviolet rays. Also take a grey graduation filter (or even orange graduation, blue graduation) lens, which is especially helpful in balancing out the strong contrast between sky and earth when photographing backlit scenery.

Sunshine City — Changchun

On the Songhuajiang-Liaohe Plain of Northeast China, lies the “Spring City of the North” — Changchun. The capital of Jilin Province, it has been a centre of politics, economy, science and technology, culture, and transport. Its various other monikers such as “Forest City”, “Auto City” and “Movie City” are telltale signs of its vibrancy and the liveliness of the city has earned it the title “Sunshine City”.

Climate

Changchun has distinctive seasons, with a long winter and short summer. The weather is mild in spring, cool in summer, clear in autumn and snow-covered in winter. The temperature averages are -17.2°C in January and 22.9°C in July, while average annual rainfall is 567 mm, and the snowfall is 20 to 25 cm in winter. It has a continental semi-humid monsoon climate.



Famous Attractions

1. Jingyuetan

The Jingyuetan (Clear Moon Pond) State Forest Park is in the southeast of Changchun, a mere 18 km from the city centre. Its name was derived from the crescent shape the embankment took when water filled the reservoir. Known for its crystal clear waters and lushly forested mountains, it has been hailed as the sister pond to Taiwan's Sun and Moon Pond.

The park has an area of 186 sq km, of which the pool takes up 432 hectares. There are 119 hills in total and the vast man-made forest makes the park largest of its kind in Asia. Jingyue Pond was listed as one of the country's key tourist attractions by the State Council in 1988, and in the following year, it was classified as a State Forest Park. In 1993 it was named a

Provincial Level Tourist Attraction and in 1995 a Tourism Economy Development Zone by the Jilin Provincial Government. In 2000 it was ranked one of China's AAAA tourism scenic spots, then in 2001 it received the title of National Model Scenic Area for well-run tourism, while in 2002 it was chosen as one of the pilot areas for the country's tourism eco-system conservation project. The abundant tourism resources that are unique to the area have made Jingyue Pond an oasis in the hustle and bustle of the city. It is the ideal destination for tourists to trek through in spring, escape the heat in summer, enjoy the fall colours in autumn and play in the snow in winter.



Main Attractions

North Putuo Temple

The temple is often packed with Buddhist worshippers because of its longstanding history. Deep within the Shiyang (Rocky Goat) Shihu (Rocky Tiger) Mountain which holds ancient cemeteries from the Jin Dynasty, the temple is steeped in ancient culture and a visit here gives a deeper understanding of the essence of China.



Green Pine Jingyue Tower

The neighbouring Green Pine (Bisong) Jingyue Tower is replete with the classical styles of the Taiping Bell Tower. Standing 11 storeys high, the tower houses collections of folk art, calligraphy and ceramics, chess and music, bonsai and flower displays. Inside, amid the atmosphere of beauty and serenity and looking down at the glorious view is an experience never to be forgotten.

Jingyuetan Beach

The largest man-made beach in Jilin, the Jingyuetan Beach takes up over 10,000 square metres and can hold up to 3,000 people. When the sun is scorching, seek refuge in the tents and huts, or have fun in the water, play a game of volleyball. The beach will satisfy your every tropical holiday wish, without having to leave the province. After the aquatic adventures, there is nothing better than a rest in a Korean-style tent, feasting on a delicious Jingyue fish banquet.



Ski Fields

The Jingyuetan ski field is a key venue for China's northeastern winter tourism. It has successfully held the National Cross-Country Skiing Competition and three national cross-country skiing titles. Jingyuetan's winter averages -16.3°C, with high humidity and soft fluffy snow. The Jingyuetan ski field has an area of 50,000 square metres and five courses, with beginner, intermediate, advanced and cross-country courses, accommodating up to 2,500 people. If you're a novice to the slopes, the ski school has professional instructors on hand who will have you skiing confidently in two hours.



Deer Park/ Ginseng Garden

There are thousands of spotted deer at the 30,000-square-metre deer park, as well as the larger variety of Xun deer from the foot of the Tianshan mountains which is on the country's secondary protected species list. The gentle and tame Xun deer will even frolic with visitors. The Ginseng Garden offers a great opportunity to purchase some of nature's finest herbal medicines.



Forest Oxygen Bar

The complete forest eco-system, a mixed forest of broad-leaved trees and conifers, has 30 types of trees, including magnificent red pines, lush firs, elegant birches, weeping willows and Mongolian oaks with leaves as broad as your hand. The woods are fragrant from the resin of the pines and full of clean, pure air so it's no wonder people call it the "forest baths" and a natural "oxygen bar".

Travel Info

Admission: Individuals 40 yuan; skiing 65 yuan/ two hours; groups: 20 yuan/ person

Skiing: 40 yuan/ two hours, 35 yuan/ hour, 50 yuan/ 2.5 hours

Opening hours: 8:30~21:00 (winter)

Tel: (431) 4518000

Transport: Take bus No. 160 at the train station to get to Jingyuetan, or No. 120 from Changchun Film City, or No. 62 to Sanma Road, then transfer to tourist bus No. 102.



2. Puppet Manchuria Palace Museum

Changchun fell to Japanese aggression to become the capital of the Puppet Manchurian State from 1932 to 1945, and there remain a large number of relics from the period, the most representative being the Puppet Manchuria Palace Museum and the "eight ministries". The address of the Puppet Palace is at No. 5, Guangfu Road North, Kuancheng District. The palace, built for the puppet emperor Aixin Jiaoluo Puyi, when the Japanese invaders set up a "Manchuria State", was an extension of the Jilin and Heilongjiang government buildings.

The main part of the palace comprises a group of two-storey buildings roofed with golden enamel tiles, including

the Qinmin Building, Tongde Palace and the Jixi Building. The architecturally distinctive and East-West fusion style remains impressive to this day. Split into an outer part for Pu Yi's political affairs and an inner living quarters for him and his family. Now both palaces are museums with displays of artifacts.

The complex life of Puyi is inextricably tied to the destiny of old China, through displays that shed more light on Puyi and his fate, and the history of old China is reflected realistically. The Puppet Manchuria Palace is important historical evidence of the Japanese aggression, thus it has been classified as a key protected historical site.

Main Attractions

Major Buildings of the Palace

- ✧ The Qinmin Building and Tongde Palace were used by Puyi to administer political affairs and hold major ceremonies;
- ✧ Jixi Building, where Puyi and his concubines lived;
- ✧ Huaiyuan Building, used to commemorate and make sacrifices to ancestors;
- ✧ The Jiale Palace and Qingyan Hall, used for major banquets;
- ✧ Calligraphy and painting pavilion, Chinese dining room, Western dining room, imperial garden, rockery, air-raid shelter, swimming pool and other facilities;
- ✧ The themed displays of the east and west wings include the over 6,000 priceless artifacts of the Puppet Manchuria Palace Museum, as well as treasures and precious art pieces that Puyi removed from the Beijing



Forbidden City, which are now on display after being restored to their former glory.

Photo exhibitions: "From Emperor to Citizen", "Puyi and His Queen, Concubines", and "Lest we forget September 18".



Historical Buildings of the Puppet State

The "Eight Ministries" were the eight main administrative departments of the Puppet Manchurian State, being the Military Department, Legal Department, Economics Department, Transport Department, Agriculture Department, Education Department, Foreign Affairs Department and Civil Affairs Department. These buildings have been well preserved and can be found in the city's central district. Why not find them yourself?

Travel Info

Admission: 40 yuan (excl. tourist guide fees)

Opening hours: 8:40-15:30

Add: No. 5, Guangfu Road N, Kuancheng District, Changchun

Tel: (431)2866611

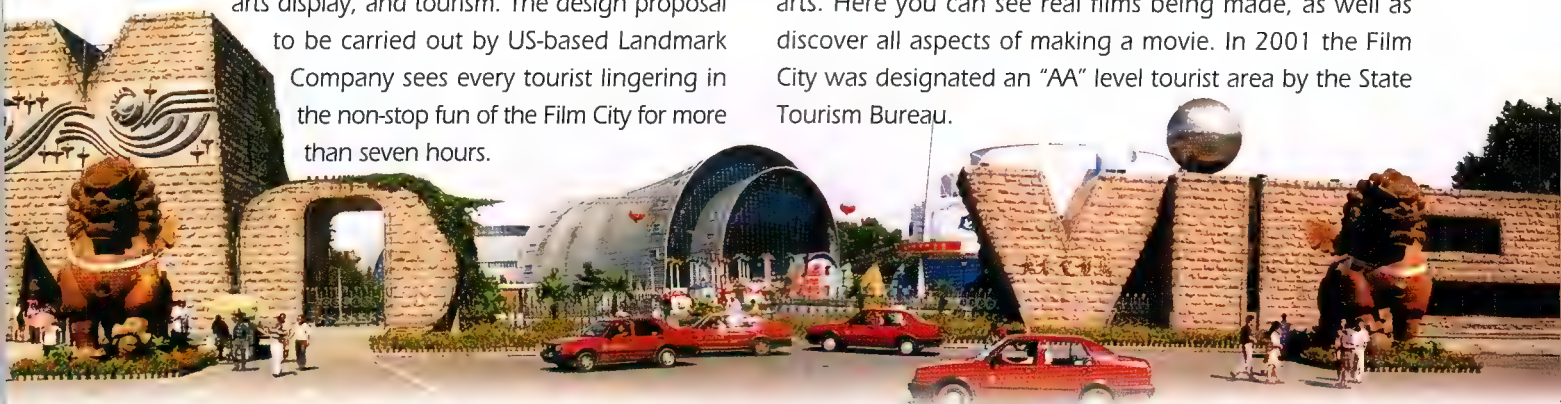
Transport: Take bus No. 268, 1, 8, 18, 80, or 264



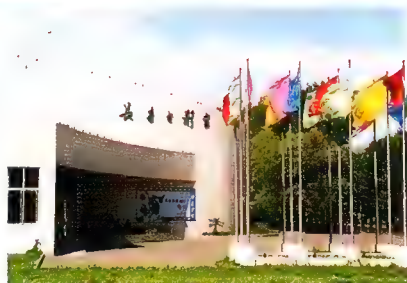
3. Changchun Film City

In the next five years, Changchun Movie Studio will rebuild the Millennium Film City, making it the "Hollywood of the Orient", a one-stop shop with film production, cinematic arts display, and tourism. The design proposal to be carried out by US-based Landmark Company sees every tourist lingering in the non-stop fun of the Film City for more than seven hours.

The Film City was built in 1992 and covers 36 hectares. Modern and multi-functional, it is an all-round tourist attraction mainly for the display of cinematic and visual arts. Here you can see real films being made, as well as discover all aspects of making a movie. In 2001 the Film City was designated an "AA" level tourist area by the State Tourism Bureau.



Main Attractions



Great Movie World

The core of Changchun Film City, Great Movie World is 2,000 square metres of movie fun. It is built on a double curved network structure that is rarely seen in China, with different areas such as the Movie Adventure Palace, Movie History Museum, Sound Recording Hall, Live Shooting Hall, Special Effects Hall and the Movie Space Hall. With dining and recreational facilities, your day here can be as relaxing or as exciting as you like.

Movie Palace

Changchun Film City is a key venue for Changchun Film Festivals, and the Movie Palace is where Film Festival judges watch and evaluate the films.

Movie Sound Effects

Ever wanted to know how the sounds of wind, rain, thunder, horse galloping, snow sloshing were created in post-production? This section shows visitors the trade secrets.

Movie History Museum

Through sculptures, photographs and models, the museum shows the processes that go into making a film, as well as the history of film making and especially the glorious journey of China's film production that was wrought with difficulties.

Movie Special Effects

"Aerial bridge bombing", "person in the painting", "underwater photography" are just some of the special effects used in films that you will see uncovered here.

Movie Adventure Palace

With special cinematic techniques — sound, light, motors, electricity and so on — the Palace makes all adventures imaginable come alive. Starting from the relics of an 18th century Australian city, you will be taken through the primitive forests of America's west, then cross the Spanish seas and conquer the gunfire in Berlin, sneak into the Tut's Tombs in Egypt and even pillage a Qing dynasty concubine's tomb.

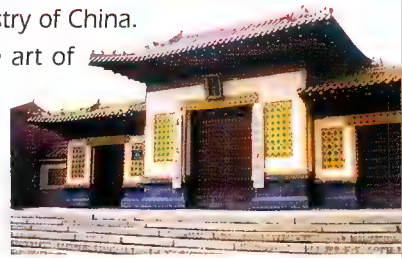
Travel Info

Admission: 80 yuan (10 sites), 50 yuan (seven sites), family ticket (for three) 100 yuan
Tourist guide fee: 40 yuan/ 1~10 persons, 60 yuan/ 11~20 persons, 80 yuan/ 21~30 persons
Opening hours: 8:30~16:30
Add: No. 92, Luyuan District, Changchun
Tel: (431) 7628737
Transport: Take bus No. 262, 19, 266, 52, or 54, or a cable car

4. Changchun Movie Palace (Changchun Movie Studio)

Changchun Movie Studio, in the southwest of the city, was the first movie studio of the new China and one of China's most prominent comprehensive movie production bases. Since its inception, the CMS has produced a huge number of dramas and documentaries, and translated over 700 movies from overseas. At the same time, the CMS has trained generations of film artists and

enriched the performing arts industry of China. Today, with its deep roots in the art of filmmaking and its widespread fame as the birthplace of many cinematic masterpieces, the CMS has become a unique and totally entertaining tourist spot.



5. China First Auto Works

Changchun, to China what Detroit is to the US, is a home to China's largest auto manufacturer-the First Auto Works (FAW) Group Corp. It owns two key domestic brands "Jiefang" (for trucks) and "Hongqi" (Red-Flag Limousines), and jointly produces Audis and Jettas with German automaker Volkswagen. It is capable of producing 450,000 vehicles per year.

FAW enjoys unrivalled status in the history of new China's automotive industry. The first car ever produced by China was made here. One in every five domestically produced cars is from FAW. In 1998, FAW climbed to the

top of the ladder in the industry with 7.629 billion yuan worth of intangible asset in its brand name alone. In 2000 FAW's import and export total reached US\$630 million, bringing into the country US\$100 million in foreign currency. The "auto tour" has become FAW's way of displaying to the world its culture and quality production facilities, while the city of Changchun is gradually becoming China's "Detroit". Automotive culture is now more than ever an integral part of the city's spirit.



Main Attractions

Mao Zedong Autographed Plaque

The Han white jade foundation stone that Chairman Mao autographed for FAW to commemorate its launch is another highlight. It has witnessed the hardships of FAW's early days and the breakthrough of becoming China's first automotive plant.

Jiang Zemin Autographed Plaque

Former Chinese president Jiang Zemin left some words on a commemorative plaque "Building a modern automotive industrial base" to mark FAW's third stage in its long life. The move signifies the historic transformation of FAW from being a truck-manufacturer to an all-round automotive producer.

Cityscape

A tour of the auto city is also an opportunity to take in the unique Russian-style architecture.

Gift Cars from Party Leaders and Celebrities

The collection includes: the Renault car that Premier Zhou Enlai gave to FAW in 1961; the Mercedes-Benz 600 that Vice-Premier Chen Yi gifted to FAW; the Mazda that three-time world table tennis men's singles champion Zhuang Zedong received from Japan.

"FAW Volkswagen"

Hailed as a milestone in China's car-making industry, the Jetta car production facilities are open to visitors.

Truck Production Line

Each year 120,000 trucks roll off the production line, with one new truck driving out of the workshop every two minutes.

Historic Vehicles

FAW's self-produced Jiefang brand CA10 truck (chassis No. 1): China's first and only Dongfeng limousine; China's first Jiefang military off-road vehicle; the first Red Flag limousine, the list goes on....

Cars for Greats

Here you will find the Dongfeng limousine that Chairman Mao used in 1958; the bullet-proof Red Flag limousines that Chairman Mao and China's first state leaders used; the Mercedes-Benz limousine that Chen Yi used when he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs; as well as the Red Flag parade car that Presidents Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin rode in for the country's 35th and 50th founding day anniversaries respectively.



China FAW Nong'an Car Testing Centre

This is China's only cold-climate car testing centre with state-of-the-art facilities, where you can see the entire testing process a car goes through on the centre's various courses.

Antique & Vintage Cars

Rolls-Royce of England, Ford, Cadillac and Lincoln vintage cars from the US; three commemorative cars signed by state leaders Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Hu Jintao and international VIPs, society celebrities, model workers and worker representatives.

Commemorative Cars from Major Events

The one millionth Jiefang CA10B truck; the last Jiefang CA15 truck ever produced; the first new model CA141 (yellow) truck; the model car for the 50th anniversary celebrations of China's founding that was driven through Tian'anmen Square; the Red Flag limousine that Lin Biao used when trying to escape the country, in which the bullet holes in the windows and doors can still be seen clearly.



Travel Info

Opening hours: 8:00-16:30

Add: No. 10, Auto works, Feiyue Road, Changchun

Tel: (431) 5757898

Transport: Bus No. 19, 319 or 252



6. Changchun World Sculptures Park

The park's highlight, "Peace and Conversation" by the world famous sculptor Francesco Pirelli was a gift from Italy's Nogaredo. Changchun is the only city in Asia to receive the gift after Toronto and Sarajevo.

The Changchun World Sculptures Park, situated at the southern end of

from 75 countries and regions were received.

In the sculptural art exhibition centre of close to 10,000 square metres, visitors can enjoy the "Peace, Friendship, Spring" theme sculpture from famous sculptor Ye Yushan as well as 282 sculpture pieces from over 80 countries and regions that were shown at past expos.

Translated by
Cheng Lei

Travel Info

Opening hours: Whole day

Add: Southern end of People's Street

Transport: Bus No. 112



Changchun's People's Street, takes up close to 100 hectares, and is the world's largest sculpture theme park set in the centre of a city. Since 1997, the city of Changchun has held five international sculpture exhibitions, and at the fifth expo, more than 1,600 pieces made by 415 artists





Chua Lam

A Man Who Enjoys Life

Photos & article by Huang Yanhong

There are many wealthy people in this world, but few who can make a living from the sheer pleasure of life. Few people have the chance to mix their passions with their careers. Whether living or making a living, they find sparks of inspiration, and this is the happiest thing in life. I'm sure Chua Lam is one of these.

I wait for Chua Lam at the Guangzhou Railway Station at the arranged time. A group of arrival passengers reach the exit and a man with a healthy, ruddy face appears, arousing heated discussion among several young people in the waiting crowd. When one boy asks who this guy is, the others in the group snap back: "How stupid you are! You even don't know who Chua Lam is."

◆ A Celebrity Carrying a Monk's Bag ◆

Among the numerous columns in Hong Kong's papers, not many are worth reading, as they often rehash the same old stories. But what Chua Lam's writings are quite different. They contain first-hand

material as well as independent ideas.

The Chua Lam now in front of me, carrying an orange monk's bag, looks healthy, easy-going, not like other celebrities at all.

I ask how he exited from the station so quickly, and he smiles and puts it down to his experience in traveling: he had walked to the last carriage before the train entered the station so as to get close to the exit.

◆ Women Are Better Survivors ◆

After leaving the railway station, I accompany Chua Lam to Nanhai to see two of his friends. When Chua travels, he always has beautiful

women accompanying him, and so it is on this trip. A woman called Jessy joins us at the railway station. Jessy is not only pretty, but a talented artist. She runs a fashion shop selling clothes she designs herself, which, blending national culture with modern fashion, are popular among professional people.

Chua expresses his admiration for independent women like Jessy. He admits that women have stronger survival abilities than men. "When I was a child, there was war and we lived in Nanning, capital of Guangxi. My father sold mosquito nets to support the family, but it was hard to sell any in wartime. It was my mother who made a living for the family by selling fruit," Chua recalls.

He jokes that for men like us, the best place to live is Bali where men are supported by women and do not need to work. In that way they can devote themselves to the arts. He says Thai women are also very friendly and they answer every question you ask because according to Buddhist teaching, it would be impolite not to do so.

We reach Nanhai by noon

and have lunch in Qilin Villa with other friends. One of the dishes is "Luzhou Bamboo Shoots", which reminds Chua of his childhood when there was a bamboo grove in the backyard of his home. He liked to play in it and hear the cracking sounds of bamboo shoots breaking the earth. A huge dish, a 3.5-kg fish from the lake, is served and Chua tastes it. He commends the first piece of fish as well cooked.

After busying himself for a while, the chef formally presents a dish called "Garlic Aroma Bones", declaring that it is a gift for Mr. Chua. While we eat, the chef stands by, seemingly expecting something. Finally, Chua says, "Mmm, it's delicious," and the chef

shows a big smile — this is what he has been waiting for. Then, with the words "Wonderful", "Very good" and so on, the plate is quickly emptied.

Several waitresses appear, asking if Chua will pose for a photo with them. There is no reason to refuse, of course, so Chua agrees happily. Then, before I notice, Chua has paid the bill.

◆ Eating and Drinking Means Life ◆

"Chua Lam Enjoying the World" has become very popular among the people of Hong Kong. Those who have read it in newspapers or watched it on television all enjoy it and aim to travel around the world like Chua. To live like Chua, passing each day with beautiful women, delicious food and charming scenery, is something that nobody can help but envy.

"If there are genes deciding a man's laziness, the French must have the most of them," Chua remarks. "The genes work so

well in them that every day, they only look at the most beautiful, do what makes them happiest, taste the most delicious and lie in most comfortable beds.... That is life and you should enjoy it completely."

"I have spent most of my life studying

the meaning of life, and my conclusion is that life means eating and drinking," Chua continues. Chua has practised this philosophy for years. One of his main jobs is a guide for cuisine travel groups. He tells me that he and his friends have established a travel service company in Hong Kong and their guests are mainly from Japan. The company owns 30 buses and provides travellers with the best lodgings and food. Though the world economic situation is not good, tourism can still find its market. Chua also takes Hong Kong travel



2



1. Chua Lam is asked to pose for a photo with the staff in the restaurant
2. Happiness is... eating and drinking
3. Eager to savour the next dish
4. Chua Lam attends many different cuisine events



4

◆ Making a Career Out of Passion ◆



Though Chua Lam dislikes being called a gourmet, he cannot help showing his intelligence in eating. He tells me his secret: "To be a food lover, you must be curious and try everything. My wife often says that the easiest way to kill me would be to put poison in a dish that I have never tried." He owes his stories about eating to his curiosity. I tell him that his writings always make me hungry and he laughs.

Chua has many passions and some have become successful careers. He began working life in

Japan where he studied cinema. In the following four decades, he worked as a film-maker. Later, he took up other jobs, one by one, all by chance.

Before he realized it, he became a food expert, a tea trader, a snack retailer, a restaurant owner, a sauce maker, a store owner, a medicine salesman, and a writer... and he forgot that his original career was film-making.

Translated by Gloria Shang

groups to Guangzhou, Shanghai, Ningbo and other places on the Chinese mainland, where he believes his customers can enjoy eating and drinking.

People call him a gourmet, but he does not care. "I prefer to be a my own person, a writing person, a movie person, and so on. You cannot call somebody an eater, or eating person; at most, you can call him or her food-enjoying person," he says.

These days, many people like to call themselves gourmets, wrapping themselves in the banner of "culinary culture". Compared with Chua Lam, who loves eating, knows how to eat and enjoys great popularity in Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta, these so-called gourmets, who have just copied a few recipes or told a few stories about eating, should feel ashamed.

I see Chua's card gives only his name, telephone number and seal, but no indication of his title. It reminds me that one day, if I should become famous, I, too, should avoid boasting.



1. From film-maker to writer, Chua has experienced a colourful life

2. Chua at a pottery workshop in Nanhai, Guangdong

Postscript

I especially enjoy the humour in Chua's writings, so I ask for tips on writing. He says he began writing when he was in middle school to make money. He did not write anything for 20 years when he was involved in the cinema. When he picked up his pen again, he wrote short articles. Hong Kong people are too busy to read long books or "heavy" stories, and they prefer short and straightforward writing. So he began the column culture. And the lazy editors carry whatever they receive, with little editing.

Day by day, he collects his column writings and publishes them in books, which now number more than 100. Chua says most of his writings are finished while travelling. As soon as he finishes a piece, he sends it to the editor. Apart from food, he also writes about travel, culture and history.

On our way back from Nanhai, I ask if he is going to write about this night in Guangzhou, and he nods. Seeing he has to work so hard, I end my interview with him....



Readership Survey

China Tourism always appreciates feedback from its readers. In accordance with your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Historical Tour Across Gansu, Qinghai, & Shaanxi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guzang Festival of the Miao	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tales of Heicheng	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taiwan's Yushan Mountains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chua Lam: A Man who Enjoys Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Photographs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tips for the Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Opinions:					

Name: (Mr./Ms./Mrs.) _____

Address: _____

Country: _____

Age: _____ Occupation: _____ Number of trips to China in the last 5 years: _____

Where (how) did you first see *China Tourism*?

☐ Subscription ☐ Newsstand or bookstore

☐ Hotel Name: _____ ☐ Others _____

Main purpose for reading *China Tourism*?

☐ Planning trips ☐ General interest in China's customs, scenery, etc. ☐ Business

☐ Tourist Trade purposes ☐ Others _____

What do you like most about *China Tourism*?

Are you happy with the factual content of *China Tourism*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What are your suggestions for improvement?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It provides us with invaluable feedback which will help us improve *China Tourism* magazine for you.

*Please mail this questionnaire to our office at 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or fax to (852) 2561 8196.

LOTUS BANQUET IN SANSHUI

EATING WITH FAIRIES ON THE WATER

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin



In the lotus world of Sanshui, we enjoyed a variety of colourful lotus flowers. And then, in the pervasive fragrance of lotus flowers, we experienced folk customs, songs and dances on the waters. At noon, we had a meal in a dining hall in the lotus world. I was fortunate enough to savour a "lotus banquet" which I had never had before. It was really another kind of experience.

Compared with many dinners I have had, the lotus banquet was not luxurious, for the main ingredients of all the dishes were just the natural products of the lotus pool. However, they appeared fresh, delicate and simple, no matter what their colours, smells, tastes and shapes.

The banquet consisted of just six dishes, none of which cost more than 40 yuan. However, they were all full of unique flavours, absolutely superior to those of common restaurants and hotels.



Sour Sliced Lotus Root

Thin slices of fresh lotus root, pickled with a small amount of sweet vinegar. Half transparent, the pickled lotus root tastes dainty and crisp, and the slight sweet and sour taste does not impair the fresh smell of lotus. It makes a good appetizer before a meal.

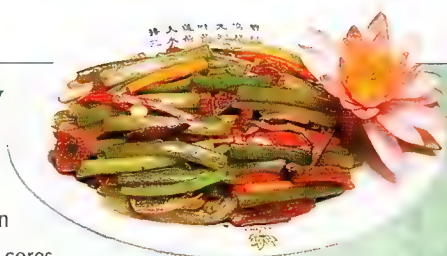
Reflected Moon in a Lotus Pool

Made with egg whites fried with granules of lotus stalks and preserved ham, this dish is served on a bed of lotus leaf. The leaf resembles a lotus pool, the albumen is white clouds, and in the centre is a moon made of a yolk. In this way an artistic representation of a moon reflected in a lotus pool is conceived. (38 yuan)



Colourful Water Lily Stalks

The dish takes peeled stalks of water lilies as its main ingredient. Tender and crisp cores are cut into pieces, then mixed and fried with strips of green and red pimentos, mushrooms, preserved ham, and carrots. (28 yuan)



Distinctive Fried Lotus Flowers

Dipped in yolk paste, lotus petals are then deep-fried, spontaneously curling up in a golden colour. They taste crisp, with a faint scent of lotus flowers. (28 yuan)



Lotus Flowers with Seafood Grain Stuffing

This dish looks quite like the stuffed lettuce buns of Guangdong: grain stuffing mixed with vegetables, wrapped in fresh lettuce. In contrast, the Lotus Flowers with Seafood Grain Stuffing excels in colour, smell, taste and shape.

It takes lotus petals as a wrapper, inside which are stuffed grain foods, seafood, and maize. Both the stuffing and the petals are edible, unique both in flavour and taste. The fresh faint scent of the petals leaves an especially pleasant aftertaste. (38 yuan)



Streaky Pork with Lotus Seeds

This meat dish in the lotus banquet is made of sliced streaky pork. Each slice envelops a piece of lotus seed, and is then cooked. Pleasing to eyes and highly desirable, this dish is extraordinarily aromatic. (38 yuan)



Order dishes one day ahead

The lotus banquet is suitable for city-drifters who are getting more health conscious. However, don't take it for granted that a lotus banquet can be enjoyed at any time of the year. Lotus flowers are seasonal, usually blossoming between June and July. However, as the Lotus World in Sanshui is home to many of the world's lotus varieties, the season can be extended from April to September. In other seasons, lotus flowers blossom in a greenhouse as ornamentals, but due to their limited amounts, visitors can only look at them. Even in season, one has to order dishes one day ahead for a lotus banquet, because the flowers, leaves and stalks served at the table have to be as fresh as possible. All the ingredients are processed as soon as they are picked.

1. The lotuses emerging from the water
2. Delicious and fragrant lotus food ignite your eating sense
3. The dance tells the story of fairy maidens of lotus



Travel Tips

The Lotus World, located in the Sanshui District of Foshan City, Guangdong Province, is the largest park of its kind in the world, with lotus flowers as its theme. Covering 800,000 square metres, this park contains nine sections, and more than 300 varieties of lotus are cultivated.

Transport: A visitor can take a direct train, T362, from Hong Kong to Sanshui Station (about three hours), or take a direct bus from Hong Kong to Sanshui, or take buses from Shenzhen or Zhuhai to Sanshui, and then take a town car or a taxi in Sanshui to the Lotus World on the outskirts.

Accommodation: The four-star Lotus Holiday Inn within the Lotus World. Standard twin-bed room: 250 yuan/night. Tel: (757) 7751608. Discount may be offered during off-peak seasons.

Horses Riding Across the Sky

Photos & article by Zhu Lin



Crossing the snow-covered passes on the way into the Tibetan ethnic region of western Sichuan Province, I noticed countless “fengmaqi” (Tibetan sutra paper drawn with a horse) all over the ground, as well as colourful Tibetan sutra streamers rustling in the wind. Only when I saw a spectacular view of the steed flags overwhelmingly flying over the sky at a Buddhist ceremony at the Langyi Monastery in Aba County did I come to learn something about them.

The Huogong (“bSang mchod” in Tibetan) Festival, a worship of the heaven god, is celebrated in many places in the Tibetan area. It has come down from an ancient tale of Langyi (sNang zhig) Monastery. According to the tale, there was a demon in Langyi Monastery. Before he was brought under control, the demon was a wicked devil, disrupting the lives local Tibetan people. So the people pleaded the dignitaries of the temple to get rid of him.

A Demon Converted

Namkha(i) Lodrey, the 35th abbot of Langyi Monastery, was a man of great wits and kindness. With his superior martial arts skills and sympathetic mind, he mastered the demon and accepted him as a guardian god of Langyi Monastery. To benefit all living beings, the demon endlessly patrols his heavenly territory, day and night without rest. But he needs weapons on patrol, so on the 15th day of the sixth

month in the Tibetan calendar, the date that the demon became a god, the local Tibetan people will come to the monastery to participate in the Huogong ceremony. Each carries a thin long wooden rod. The people follow a designated routine, walking slowly to a slope behind the lamasery, and putting the rods together. These sharp rods are arrows offered to the demon once a year.



Fengmaqi — Warhorse of the Demon

In addition to the arrows, the Tibetan people also believe that the demon is in the deepest need of horses. These horses come in the form of paper rubbings from engravings of liturgies, incantations and patterns, and are known as “fengmaqi” flags.

These paper pieces are as large as two matchboxes, and the patterns vary in different areas, but all the designs comprise five supernatural beings, which are respectively a legendary bird known as a roc, a dragon, a tiger, a steed and a lion. The wind-like horse is stationed at the centre, appearing as if it were galloping leftwards. On the back of the horse are propitious diamonds and pears, showing that wherever it goes, it will radiate the lights of peace,

prosperity and harmony.

The Huogong Festival at Langyi Monastery is a grand pageant for the local Tibetan people. They carried branches of pine and cypress, wooded rods bearing flags, *zanba* (a Tibetan food of roasted highland barley flour), butter, walnuts, highland barley kernels and candies, as well as piles of steed flags beautifully printed, moving in throngs towards a sacrificial altar on a slope near the monastery.

At this moment, four lamas beside of the altar blew two trombones and two cornets and the people resting nearby gathered around. Dozens of lamas stepped out of the lamasery where they had been meditating, and sat down near the altar. Each took a lection board in his hands and began clapping. The ritual clarion suddenly rose in volume; the throng, talkative just a moment ago, became silent at once. When the "lama with an iron rod" of the monastery appeared, it signified the formal beginning of the ritual.

Flying Horses

Accompanied by young lamas, the "lama with an iron stick" walked around. All those in his presence had expressions of reverence, lowering their heads and pretending to "be frightened", to show that they had understood the significance of the iron rod.

The lama with an iron rod eventually sat at the center of the flat ground, and the ritual clarion stopped. Then three heavy drumbeats emanated from the line of the lamas, and the lamas began to recite reciting lections in chorus. Almost at the same time, the offerings on the

altar were set alight. The throng burst into jubilation, shouting and calling the demon's name. Around the altar, they threw the steed flags into the sky. In no time, the paper pieces were flying through the air, turning and fluttering, covering the sky. The steed flags falling to the ground covered the soft meadows around. People even threw highland barley kernels, walnuts and candies into the fire and the sky.

The ritual clarion blew again. Led by the lamas, people went around the altar, and around of the red walls of the lamasery. The people threw the Tibetan sutra paper with horse pattern as they walked. The papers hovered over their heads, as if they would never fall. The Tibetan people were convinced that so long as the tossed sutra papers whorled in the sky, they

would be received by the demon.

The people who had thrown all their sutra papers left, feeling contented. And the lamas completed their lections. Following the "lama with an iron rod", they too walked around the altar, throwing all the sutra papers in their hands into the sky.

Translated by Huang Deyuan

1. The "fengmaqi" flying over the sky at the Huogong Festival
2. "Fengmaqi" are the warhorses of the demon
3. The "lama with an iron rod" (third from the right) makes a circuit of the main pile with young lamas
4. Both the *zanba* (a Tibetan food of roasted highland barley flour) and pine and cypress branches are essential to the ceremony
5. The lamas of the Langyi Monastery bind the pine and cypress branches with colourful silk bands, to be set alight



THE LOST HISTORY OF QINGHAI LAKE

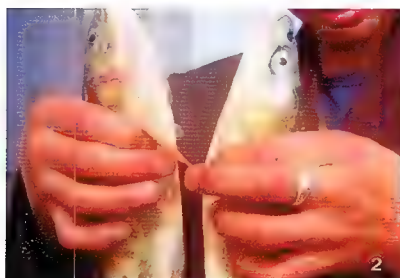
Photos & article by Mehdi Chebil Link

China is famed worldwide for its historic buildings and garden, much less known are the natural wonders that bears high, sometimes unusual historical significance. Among these, Qinghai Lake in Qinghai Province would have to rate very highly. It is only after travelling six hours southwest of Xining, the province's capital city, that we finally reached the largest lake in China, its pristine blue waters flaring under the late afternoon sun. As we got closer to its shore, we encountered our first surprise: a succession of various and breathtaking scenery.

Life on Qinghai's No.1 Attraction

The Qinghai Lake itself is the inescapable background of all these activities. Seen from the sky, it has a pretty much circular shape; but if you're looking at it from the ground, Qinghai Lake appears as a flat and borderless extent of water. This flatness gives us a somewhat surrealist feeling: there is no way to catch a glimpse of the place in its entirety and our gaze got lost, wandering on the vast extent of turquoise water. The shores are mainly grasslands abundant with all kinds of birds; and some swamp-like areas give way on rocky or sandy land.

During the day, the lake itself remains largely free of human presence, giving a feeling of untamed wilderness specific to western China. All the locals who make a living from it would tell you that Qinghai Lake harbours real frightening storms, when the waters seem to open themselves to swallow the imprudent fishermen. Sometimes, the region seems to be living outside the 21st century; and the local fishermen admit that



the lake's changing mood keeps on ruling their life. As one of them put it, their income can be divided by four between the fast months of June to

About the author: A Frenchman born in Paris in the 1970s, Link finally moved to Australia and graduated in Asian studies at the ANU. Besides finishing his studies in Chinese civilisation, he met two passions that have been ruling his life ever since; his taste for photography and his gorgeous Shanghainese wife... Travelling in China then became the most delicious way of enjoying both at the same time.

July and the freezing winters!

The regulation of this fishing industry has long been a concern for the local authorities. For the fishes are also part of a bio-environment feeding up to 100,000 birds during spring! Long before attracting holidaying visitors, Qinghai Lake was a strong magnet for academics studying birds. They came from the best universities in the world down to this remote region, setting up their strong observatory lenses in springtime, the nesting season. There they watched birds that flew over the Himalayas range to come and rest in the vicinity of the welcoming salt waters.

“Qinghai Beach”, the Eastern Desert

Birds and visitors alike are attracted by the peacefulness of Qinghai Lake. But when discussing about the landscape highlights around the lake, many can't help mentioning the Qinghai Lake Desert.

After spending the night in basic accommodation, we are off to the eastern shore to have a look on the sandy dunes described so vividly by

our hosts. We are not disappointed! Seen from faraway, the Qinghaihu Desert appears as a yellow beach steadily diving into an interior blue sea. It brings the exact opposite sensation of the lake; for its main interest lies in its short size: the whole desert doesn't extend for more than a dozen kilometres. From the top of its largest dunes, one can clearly see the boundaries of the desert; from the mountainous black and white mountains of the East to the seemingly indefinite lake on the West side...

A Multicultural and Colourful Population

Sitting down here, still buzzed by this impressive sight, we realize by ourselves that Qinghai Lake must have been an ancient milestone. More than a natural wonder, the region is a cultural treasure marked by ethnic diversity. It oozes an atmosphere of Chinese Far West, with its incredible mix of minorities living around the lake.

While walking from the dunes down to the shore, we notice several white circular tents dotting the base of the nearby mountains. These are typical Mongolian dwellings, better known as "yurts". A few minutes later, we meet a shepherd of Mongolian origin who is using a simply sling to throw rocks at his cattle, thus leading hundreds of yaks and sheep to the shore of Qinghai Lake. As we keep on exploring the vicinity of the lake, we are delighted to find a range of stupas with many colourful prayer flags, witness of the everlasting presence of Tibetan Buddhism in the region.

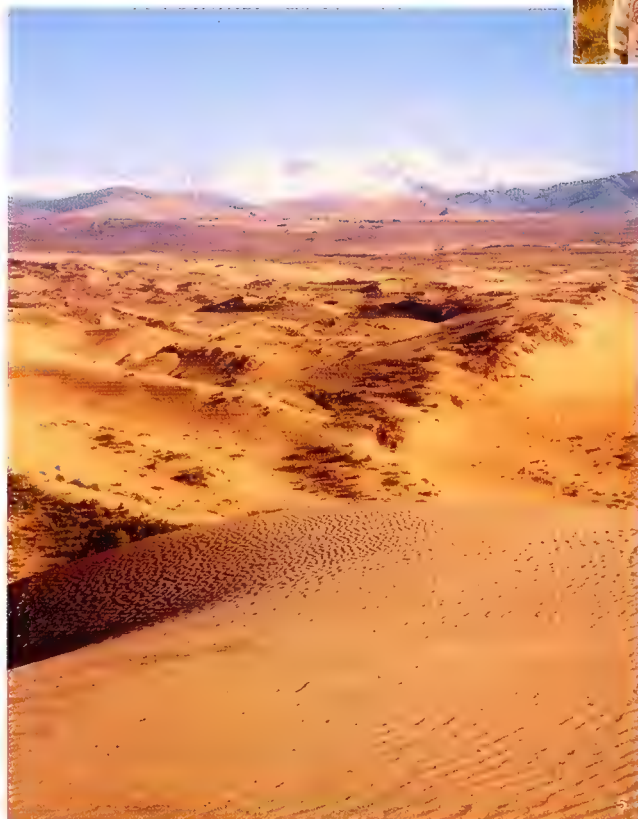
The Lost History of Qinghai Lake

This mix of different cultures and minorities found in the region reinforces our impression of a frontier area with a glorious past. As we researched the history of the lake, we learned that Qinghai Lake was the place where a

Tibetan monk, Seunam Gyamtso, was called Dalai Lama for the first time. That historical fact took us to an even more fascinating trip, a travel in the time back to the 16th century. In 1578 more precisely, when a high-profile diplomatic meeting was called on the shores of Qinghai Lake in order to secure an alliance between the Mongol world and Tibetan Buddhism. The Mongol leader, Altan Khan, recognizes the authority of the Tibetan church, and grants the reincarnation of its spiritual leader the title of "Dalai Lama" (Ocean of Wisdom).

Picking up Qinghai Lake for this ceremony was certainly a highly symbolic choice. Given its 4,500 sq km of saltwater, the lake could easily be mistaken for an interior ocean. And to the Mongols, "ocean" was more than a geographical term: it was also used as an honorific title, for leaders whose wisdom or powers were outstanding. Think of Genghis Khan for instance, whose first name is derived from the word Tenggis — "ocean" in Turkish. That particular cultural concept ensured that the strategically located Qinghai Lake became a major meeting place between the Han, Mongol and Tibetan nationalities influences — whose lively heritage is the current multiethnic population.

As we drive back to Xining, a burning sun setting in our back over the largest lake in China, we wonder how such ancient grandness could have been forgotten over the centuries. Still, we prefer to see the lost history of the lake as a blessing for visitors who can nowadays enjoy its remote, wild looking, and surrealist atmosphere.



1. Reflection of a cloudy sky upon Qinghai Lake
2. The scaleless Qinghai Lake carp is the most widespread fish in the lake, and the main source of income for fishermen
3. A young shepherd is about to use his sling to throw a rock at his cattle, in order to lead his several yaks on the shore of Qinghai Lake
4. The genuine smiles of young Tibetan kids
5. The Qinghaihu Desert spreads across dozens of kilometres, before reaching the natural barrier represented by 4,000 metres high mountains



As a Hong Kong resident I've been to Shenzhen, Macao, and Guangzhou for a few times. But for a change, where to now? Looking at likely places I found Zhaoqing in Guangdong Province, not far "up-the-road" (110 km west of Guangzhou), close enough to be a long-weekend destination. The city of Zhaoqing proved to be quite charming, modern and very fresh!



It is not until the journey reaches to within half an hour of Zhaoqing, when Dinghu Mountain — lying 18 km to the east from Zhaoqing — is seen, that the common urban-rural mix of factories and gardens allows the latter to surge through. How neat those market gardeners till their lands and how bountiful the produce.

A City Known as "Lesser Guilin"

On seeing Dinghu Mountain it is immediately understood why this area is called "Lesser Guilin" — Zhaoqing is famous for its limestone hills similar to those in Guilin

and its nearby Yangshuo in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Alighting from the train a student visiting pals proved a helpful aid in beckoning and explaining to the taxi driver the destination, the Shiu Hing Hotel, right in the centre of the town. The short journey went via a winding tree-lined road cutting through Star Lake, with the rising towers of Seven-Star Crag clearly visible across the placid lake waters.

We could hardly be more central and it was no time at all before we were crossing Duanzhou Road to take a first close up of the view and magically, the evening was upon us, dusk descended and a million fairy lights flickered on to delight the eye, revealing a veritable fairyland.

The lake's scenic sites include the seven crags, eight caves, and six ridges. The caves have their own particular characteristic, some are deep, more tortuous in their excavations,

and pitch-dark, while some are brightly-lit with their entrances located halfway down from the crag summits. Others are filled with clear waters and cold draughts.

Among the more highly reputed are Heiyan Cave and the Shuangyuan Cave, formed by erosion of the limestone by ground waters which are interlinked with outside lake waters and never run dry. The Shuangyuan Cave is 320 metres deep, has northern and southern exits, and is beset with stalactites of



various shapes. The cave scenery is accessible by a boat.

The lakes, of different sizes, are separated by winding tree-lined embankments. The innermost lake encircling the crags is the smallest of the five. Within its perimeter there are gardens, a pavilion, a pond for fish viewing, "lotus boats", a chain-link bridge and other charming features.

Penetrating the Seven-Star Crags

The limestone crags consists of seven rises and these have been given individual names: Langfeng Rock, Jade Screen Rock, Stone Room Rock, Heavenly Pillar Rock, Toad Rock, Immortal Palm Rock and Apo Rock. The 20-km-long embankments of Star Lake divides the waters into five small lakes, being, the Central, Wave and Sea, Fairy Maiden, Green Lotus and Inner Lake.

In the east of the scenic area are the Fairy Maiden Worshipping Buddha and a 1,000-year-old temple. In the west is the scenery of waves and sea facing the sun. In the south, there is the archway. In the north, the Double Source Cave, and 500 arhats — Buddhist saints. Central lie the heights of Jade Screen and Green Peaks, Water and Moon Rock, quite remarkable things hidden in the stone room, the 1,000-year-old poem corridor, the heavenly pillar, and so on.

Among the seven rock-hills are a huge sleeping Buddha formed by Apo, the Heavenly Pillar and Immortal's Palm Rocks. At the time of the Qingming (Pure Brightness) Festival and autumn equinox every year, the

sunsets at the mouth of the sleeping Buddha, thus forming a scenic wonder of the Buddha with a red pearl in the mouth.

The four outer lakes link with one another and their waters can be as clear and smooth as a mirror as they reflect the lush southern China foliage that grace the south sides of the crags in profusion. The embankments flower according to the season and make a brilliant brocade when in full bloom.

This is why Seven-Star Crags is famous for its "lush mountains, exquisite waters, perilous cliffs and fascinating caves".

Further Visit to West River

A visit to Zhaoqing would not be complete without a walk along the banks of the Xijiang, seeing the river-folk at their daily routines, gardening on the river banks, repairing their boats. Plenty riverside snacks at the wayside stalls. A nearby destination is Chongxi Pagoda.

Commonly known as Head Pagoda, the nine-storey Chongxi Pagoda was first constructed in the 16th century, during the Ming Dynasty. Each storey has eight angles whereon wind-bells are hung. When the wind blows, the sounds of the bells can be heard from all around. Legend and the rules of *fengshui* have it that a pagoda built on that spot gathers fortune and assures prosperity for the city.



Year calls has been a tradition of over 2,000 years in Zhaoqing. Many villages and enterprises have their own lion dance troupes. On such happy occasions and at festivals, lion dance troupes vie with each other to find out which group can produce the most exciting performance.

The dragon dance is another local custom. Legend has it that Deqing County, Zhaoqing, is the hometown

of the Dragon Mother. In celebrations at dragon festivals, people perform dragon dances. Three kinds of dragons are represented, the fire dragon, the colourful dragon and land dragons.

The local Cantonese opera is pretty much typical of Guangdong and if a visitor can catch a performance it will be most fortunate as they are highly reputed and are well-known in Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and on the Pearl River Delta.

Zhaoqing is famed for its steamed wrapped food, a samosa-shaped dumpling made of glutinous rice, green beans and pork, wrapped in Mudong leaves and float grass, cooked for hours.

Duan inkstone, also called Duanxi inkstone, ranks first among the four famous inkstones of China and, with a 1,300 year's history, is produced in the Duanxi area of Lingyang Gorge, the east suburb of Zhaoqing.

Zhaoqing straw mat's are also well known, made by hand from the local cattail stem and also with a history of about 1,000 years. It is said to be warm in winter and cool in summer and is not attacked by ants or bugs.



Performing lion dances during the Spring Festival while paying New

1. Zhaoqing—the "Lesser Guilin" in Guangdong
2. Let's take a happy group photo!
3. Lush trees and exquisite waters form your own secret garden
4. Red lanterns hanged in a local store
5. A view of the Zhaoqing city area

Hard cover HK\$150 HK\$120

Focus on Yunnan

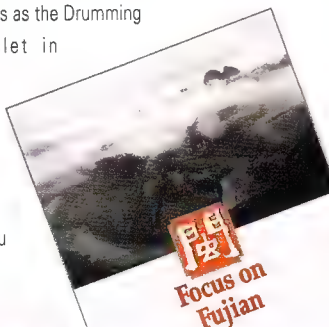
The mountainous wonderland of Yunnan enjoys a favourable warm climate year round. Its capital, Kunming, sitting alongside Yunnan's largest lake, Dianchi, has the honourable name of "Spring City". The province is full of natural wonders and cultural relics, such as the Stone Forests, the Shangri-La, and the ancient cities of Dali and Lijiang. With over 20 diverse ethnic groups making up about one-third of the population, opportunities abound for you to see their characteristic cultures and customs.



Paperback HK\$35 HK\$76
Hard cover HK\$150 HK\$120

Focus on Fujian

Situated on the southeast coast, Fujian Province overlooks Taiwan Island across the Taiwan Strait. Its mountainous landscape includes the Wuyi Mountain Scenic Area, one of the UN World Heritage sites in China. The province's zigzag coastlines, numerous beaches and charming seas offer spectacular scenic beauty as well as historical and cultural interest in such places as the Drumming Wave Islet in Xiamen and the Mazu Temple in Meizhou Island.



Paperback HK\$35 HK\$76
Hard cover HK\$150 HK\$120

Focus on Shanghai

Shanghai, the largest metropolis in China, and formerly the Far East financial centre, has experienced dramatic development over the past century. The world-famous Bund along the Huangpu River shows you buildings of different historical periods and varied architectural styles, while skyscrapers are rising in the new area of Pudong. Shanghai's multiculturalism is seen in its music — operas, nostalgic jazz and discos — and in the busy commercial district of Nanjing and Huaihai roads.



Photographic Series To Guide Your China Tours

Each book, focusing on a province or city, presents unique scenery and customs, and provides you with useful tourist information.

Paperback HK\$35 HK\$76
Hard cover HK\$150 HK\$120

Focus on Shaanxi

Shaanxi is the cradle of the Chinese civilisation and Xi'an was the capital of 13 dynasties. This has left Shaanxi a rich legacy of historical sites and cultural relics. In the provincial capital Xi'an, there is the fascinating terracotta army unearthed from the tomb of the First Emperor, Qin Shihuang; the tomb of Tang-dynasty Wu Zetian, China's first empress; and the stele forest. The province's beauty is capped with the sheer cliffs of Mount Huashan and the yellow earth of the Loess Plateau.



Paperback HK\$35 HK\$76
Hard cover HK\$150 HK\$120

Focus on Guangdong

An important gateway into China, the fertile Pearl River Delta of the southern province of Guangdong fans out from Guangzhou to the South China Sea and borders Hong Kong and Macao. The province's natural scenic spots include the limestone pinnacles of Zhaoqing's Seven Star Crag, the red sandstone of Danxia Mountain, and the volcanic beauty of Xiqiao Mountain. The capital, Guangzhou, offers plenty of history in its museums, temples, mosques and old colonial buildings.



Paperback HK\$35 HK\$76
Hard cover HK\$150 HK\$120

Focus on Guizhou

Guizhou is a land of splendid natural scenery. Its towering mountains and karst landforms team up with the gurgling rivers and magnificent waterfalls to form a wonderful work of Mother Nature. Huangguoshu Waterfalls and the limestone caves are the province's most frequented scenic spots. The 17 ethnic groups living in the picturesque province further colour the land with vivid customs and joyous festivals. It is its natural beauty and culture that make Guizhou a perfect travel destination.



Paperback HK\$65
Hard cover HK\$130

Focus on Tianjin

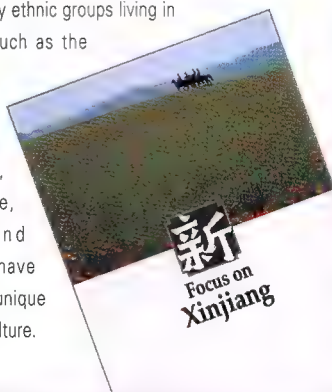
Tianjin, one of the four municipalities under direct Central Government administration, is an important industrial and commercial centre of China and the biggest port in the north. The history of the city can be found in its Ancient Culture Street, 100-year-old Western-style buildings, Opera Museum and Mazu Temple. Besides the TV Tower and the Haihe River in the city, there are scenic spots in the outskirts, including the Dule Temple and the Great Wall at Huangya Pass.



Paperback HK\$65
Hard cover HK\$130

Focus on Xinjiang

On the vast land of Xinjiang in Northwest China, there are mountains, basins, deserts and lakes, which provide tourists with numerous attractions — ruins of ancient cities and tombs along the Silk Road; Turpan, an oasis in the desert; Kanas Lake, a gem imbedded in the Altay Mountains; Bayanbulak — the Swan Lake; and the world's second largest desert, the Taklimakan. The minority ethnic groups living in Xinjiang, such as the Uygur, Kazak, Mongolian, Uzbek, Tajik, Xibe, Kirgiz and Tatar, all have their own unique colourful culture.



Paperback HK\$65
Hard cover HK\$130

Focus on Beijing

Beijing is a metropolis of everlasting charm. There are simply too many captivating things to see, to experience and to taste in this grand city with both old glamour and new mobility. There are historical sites such as the Palace Museum (the Forbidden City), the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace, and the Ming Tombs; there are also many scenic spots in its outskirts. Recently, tours have been organised for visitors to taste the real Beijing flavour of life — touring the small back lanes, having tea in a traditional-style teahouse and enjoying the Peking Opera.



Paperback HK\$65
Hard cover HK\$130

Focus on Shanxi

Shanxi Province, one of the birthplaces of the Chinese civilisation, has impressive ancient architecture and a wealth of well-preserved Buddhist temples, monasteries and grottoes. Among the most famous are the Yungang Grottoes containing some of China's oldest sculptures and Buddhist art, the Yongle Palace, the Jinci Temple, the Hanging Monastery built on a sheer cliff and the Wutai Mountain, one of China's most famous sacred Buddhist lands.



Paperback HK\$65
Hard cover HK\$130

Focus on Guangxi

Unusual topography has endowed the province with numerous spectacular karst formations — limestone caves, pinnacles and rocks. The most famous and enchanting scenic spot is Guilin, and the most travelled route, on the Lijiang River from Guilin to Yangshuo. The coastal city of Beihai has the country's largest beach, the Silver Beach. Other attractions include the varied traditional customs of ethnic minorities, the Sino-Vietnamese border area, and the mysterious Huashan cliff paintings.



Now a 20% discount is offered to our readers for all these books.

Local rates (surface postage included):

Paperback - HK \$84

Hardcover - HK \$130

Overseas rates (surface postage included):

Paperback - HK \$96 / US \$12

Hardcover - HK \$160 / US \$20

Title	Paperback Qty	Hardcover Qty
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Yunnan		
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Fujian		
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Shanghai		
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Tianjin		
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Xinjiang		
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Shaanxi		
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Guangdong		
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Guizhou		
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Shanxi		
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Guangxi		
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Beijing		
Total:		

Paperback: _____ X \$ _____ = \$ _____

Hardcover: _____ X \$ _____ = \$ _____

* For registered mail, add HK \$13 / US \$1.7

* For US cheque or US bank draft, add HK \$56 / US \$7

Total = \$ _____

Name: _____

Subscription No.: _____

Address: _____

Daytime tel.: _____

**To pay by check, please make check payable to:
Hong Kong China Tourism Press.**

Credit card ☐ VISA ☐ MASTER ☐ AE

Account No.: _____

Expiry date: _____

Signature: _____

Please mail this form to:
Hong Kong China Tourism Press
24/F Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road,
Quarry Bay, Hong Kong; or fax to (852) 2561 8196.
For more information, please call (852) 2561 8001
for the Subscription Department.

Hotels in Gansu

City	Name	Star	Address	Tel	Fax
Lanzhou	Lanzhou Legend Hotel	****	399 Tianshui Rd, Lanzhou	(931) 8882876	(931) 8887876
	Lanzhou Hotel	***	434 Donggang Rd W, Lanzhou	(931) 8416321	(931) 8418608
	Jincheng Hotel Lanzhou	***	363 Tianshui Avenue, Lanzhou	(931) 8416638	(931) 8418438
	Guanghua Hotel	***	231 Jiuquan Rd, Lanzhou	(931) 8436168	(931) 8438168
	Lanzhou Friendship Hotel	***	16 Xijin Rd W, Lanzhou	(931) 2333051	(931) 2330304
	Gansu Dizhi Hotel	**	85 Hongxing Lane, Dingxi Avenue S, Lanzhou	(931) 8618880	(931) 8616557
	Lanyuan Hotel	**	367 Yumen St, Lanzhou	(931) 7554014	(931) 7573700
	Friendship Hotel Lanzhou	**	14 Xijin Rd W, Lanzhou	(931) 2333051	(931) 2330304
	Victory Hotel Lanzhou	**	127 Zhongshan Rd, Lanzhou	(931) 8465221	(931) 8461531
	Lanhua Hotel Lanzhou	**	222 Zhongshan Rd, Lanzhou	(931) 7555981	(931) 7557635
	Lanzhou Mansion	**	7~9 Tianshui Rd, Lanzhou	(931) 8417210	(931) 8417177
	Hongyun Hotel Lanzhou	**	5 Gaolan Rd, Lanzhou	(931) 8826011	(931) 8885687
Wuwei	Tianma Hotel Wuwei Gansu	***	West Criss Cross, Wuwei	(935) 2215170	(935) 2212356
	Liangzhou Hotel	**	68 East St, Wuwei	(935) 2212711	(935) 2213008
Zhangye	Zhangye Hotel	**	56 Xianfu St, Zhangye	(936) 8212601	

Hotels in Shaanxi

City	Name	Star	Address	Tel	Fax
Baoji	Baojiduke Hotel	***	1 Dongfeng Rd, Baoji	(917) 3219777	(917) 3219788
	Phoenix Hotel Baoji	***	10 Jiangtan Rd, Baoji	(917) 3398900	
	Xifeng Hotel Baoji	***	Middle sect. of Sports Rd, Baoji	(917) 3217621	(917) 3213912
Xi'an	Hyatt Regency Xi'an	*****	158 Dongda St, Xi'an	(29) 7231234	(29) 7216799
	Hotel Royal	****	334 Dongda St, Xi'an	(29) 7235311	(29) 7235887
Xianyang	Rainbow Hotel Xianyang	***	1 Caihong Rd, Xianyang	(910) 3313472	(910) 3313456
	Qinbao Hotel Xianyang	***	60A Weiyang Rd W, Xianyang	(910) 3313388	(910) 3313368

Hotels in Xining

Name	Star	Address	Tel	Fax
Qinghai Hotel	***	158 Huanghe Rd, Xining	(971) 6144888	
Xining Hotel	***	215 Qiyi Rd, Xining	(971) 8238701	(971) 8238798
Minzi Hotel	*	Dongda St, Xining	(971) 8177951	
Yongfu Hotel	*	Jianguo Rd, Xining	(971) 8140236	
Youzheng Mansion	*	Qilian Rd, Xining	(971) 8140711	

Flights to and from Lanzhou

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing – Lanzhou	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1440	1650	CA1222
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1125	1335	WH2112
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1710	1920	WH2116
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0930	1140	WH2118
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0845	1100	XW154
Lanzhou – Beijing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1730	1935	CA1221
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0835	1035	WH2111
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1420	1620	WH2115
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1710	1910	WH2117
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2010	2215	XW 153
Chengdu – Lanzhou	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2000	2120	WH2416
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2020	2140	WH2432
	1 3 4 6	0810	0930	SZ4208
	1 3 5 7	0755	0915	SZ4902
Lanzhou – Chengdu	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1400	1515	WH2415
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1815	1930	WH2431
	1 3 4 6	1010	1130	SZ4207
	1 3 5 7	1625	1745	SZ4901

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Ürümqi – Lanzhou	2 4 5 7	1250	1500	WU2904
	3 6	1520	1755	WH2826
	1 3 5 7	1325	1545	SZ4902
	1 2 3 6	1320	1535	SZ4942
	1 3	1540	1810	3Q4962
	6	1520	1750	MU7902
	3 5 7	0905	1115	XO9606
	2 4	1045	1310	XO9508
	1 5	1145	1400	XO9378
Lanzhou – Ürümqi	2 4 5 7	0950	1210	WH2903
	3 6	1120	1440	WH2825
	1 3 5 7	0955	1235	SZ4901
	1 2 3 6	1010	1240	SZ4941
	1 3	1240	1500	3Q4961
	6	1200	1440	MU7901
	3 5 7	1835	2115	XO9605
	2 4	2050	2340	XO9507
	1 5	1930	2200	XO9377

Flights to and from Xi'an

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing – Xi'an	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1335	1515	CA1202
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0740	0920	WH2106
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0800	0940	XW 138
	1 2 3 4 5 7	2050	2230	ZZ 192
Xi'an – Beijing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1625	1805	CA1201
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1930	2100	WH2105
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1025	1200	XW 137
	1 2 3 4 5 7	1830	2005	ZZ 191
Dunhuang – Xi'an	1 3 6	1810	2040	WH2908
	2 4 6	1140	1510	XO9218
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1150	1430	ZZ 232

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
	3 5 7	1410	1740	ZZ 260
Xi'an – Dunhuang	1 3 6	1040	1310	WH2907
	2 4 6	1550	1925	XO9217
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0830	1120	ZZ 231
	3 5 7	1000	1340	ZZ 259
Ningbo – Xi'an	2 4 6	0840	1140	HU7626
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1645	1750	ZZ 792
	4	1340	1655	ZZ 516
Xi'an – Ningbo	2 4 6	1220	1520	HU7625
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1600	1605	ZZ 791
	4	1000	1305	ZZ 515

Flights to and from Xining

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing – Xining	3 7	0825	1040	CA1208
	1 4 6	1355	1615	WH2126
	2 4 6	1525	1745	SZ4133
	1 3 5 7	1415	1635	SZ4133
	2 4 6	0740	1000	XW 850
Xining – Beijing	3 7	1120	1330	CA1207
	1 4 6	1710	1905	WH2125
	2 4 6	1825	2040	SZ4134
	1 3 5 7	1715	1930	SZ4134
	2 4 6	2000	2215	XW 849
Chengdu – Xining	1	1900	2020	SZ4206
	2 5 7	0755	0925	SZ4206
	1 4	1655	1840	3U 224
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1035	1200	ZZ 452
Xining – Chengdu	1 2	100	2220	SZ4205
	2 5 7	1005	1125	SZ4205

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
	1 4	1910	2055	3U 223
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0840	1000	ZZ 451
Guangzhou – Xining	3	0745	1040	SZ4713
	2 4 6	1615	1905	XO9308
Xining – Guangzhou	3	1620	1910	SZ4714
	2 4 6	1225	1515	XO9307
Kunming – Xining	2 4	1740	2010	XO9410
	6	1650	1920	XO9410
Xining – Kunming	2 4	1455	1655	XO9409
	6	1405	1605	XO9409
Lhasa – Xining	1 3 5 7	1520	1720	SZ4218
	3	1400	1540	SZ4713
	1 2 4 6	1345	1545	SZ4811
Xining – Lhasa	1 2 4 6	1040	1245	SZ4217
	3	1140	1320	SZ4713
	1 3 5 7	1235	1440	SZ4812

Airline codes:

CA = Air China
XO = Xinjiang Airlines
3U = Sichuan Airlines

MU = China Eastern Airlines
XW = China Xinhua Airlines

SZ = China Southwest Airlines
ZZ = Chang'an Airlines

WH = China Northwest Airlines
3Q = Yunnan Airlines

* For reference only.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE No. 276

Feature Story:

Drifting Through the Water Towns of South China

The tourist sites of Zhouzhuang, Tongli, and Luzhi have been well documented, but there are many more fascinating water towns in South China's provinces like Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Follow our correspondents as they travel through these tranquil, unsophisticated backwaters, including Dongpu, Keqiao, Anchang, and Nanxun. By taking a local black-awning boat, you can appreciate the genuine experience of life on the water.



Discoveries: Meeting the Devils at Xiaohe Burial Ground

Xiaohe, a small branch of the Konqi River in Xinjiang, was a metropolis as important as modern Shenzhen or Shanghai before the fourth century. Our correspondent follows in the footsteps of an exploration team 66 years ago to rediscover the site of Xiaohe again. This mysterious area is the home of enigmatic wooden structures and a breathtaking dried corpse. And more mysteries are yet to be discovered.

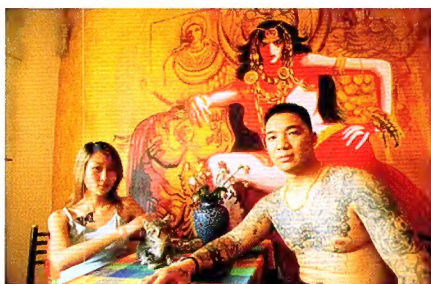
Profile: Zhong Zhengqin

During six years' of rough travelling in his younger days, Zhong Zhengqin experienced many hardships. Now he is known as one of the pioneer independent travellers in Hong Kong who has seen most places in the world. He shares with us the experience of leading a TV crew to shoot a travel programme crossing Latin America, and gives precious advice to other travel dreamers.



Excursions: Up and Down the Wuyi Mountain

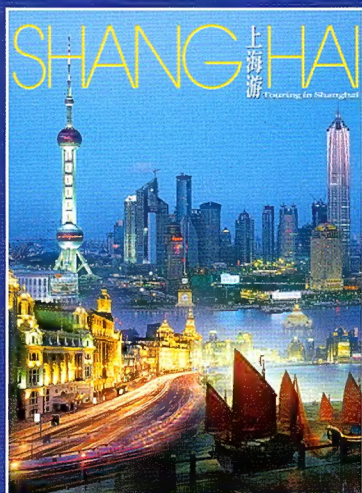
Wuyi Mountain in East China's Fujian Province is an ideal place for a short break. Tourists can enjoy leisure boating on the delicate Jiuqu Stream, while adventurers must try the excitement of rafting along the Tongmu Stream. Whichever way you choose, you will be captivated by the picturesque landscapes.



City Snaps: Authentic Kunming

If you admire Dali, Lijiang, and Shangri-La in Yunnan Province, don't miss the chance to visit the capital city — Kunming. Soak up the atmosphere of this artistic melting pot with its many different galleries, Culture Lane, tattoo workshop, antiques street, or meet the renowned painter known as "Mr. Sheep". Wonder the taverns or cafes every night, discussing art, movies, or life with strangers and foreigners. The service provided by the waiters or waitresses will also make you reluctant to leave the city.

BEST SELLER



Shanghai has evolved at an unprecedented speed for decades into the biggest commercial city in China and one of the great metropolises of the world. Favourably located at the mouth of the Yangtse River, Shanghai has a long history and a rich culture. Commercial tower blocks and traditional buildings exude their individual charms simultaneously in the Pudong District, where hundreds of buildings in different styles, old or new, are collectively known as the Exposition of World Architecture. A kaleidoscope of entertainments and festivals of Old Shanghai attracts scores of entrepreneurs and travellers alike. "Touring in Shanghai" takes you deeper into this vibrant city

through spectacular photography, along with outlines for more than 10 different kinds of tours including a shopping tour, popular tourist sights, cultural excursions, and more. Practical information summarises accommodations, transport and dining options, and tourist maps are also included. "Touring in Shanghai" is the latest, most comprehensive travel pictorial of Shanghai available in Hong Kong.



Now a **20% off** is offered to our readers

Original price HK\$120.00

Discounted price
HK\$96.00

Copies: _____

Postage (Surface mail per copy):

- ☐ Hong Kong HK \$15.00
- ☐ Macao, China, Taiwan HK \$22
- ☐ Asian countries (except Japan) HK \$36
- ☐ Non-Asian countries (including Japan) HK \$38

Name: _____ Subscription # _____ if applicable

Daytime tel.: _____ E-mail address: _____

Address: _____

Payment method:

☐ Cheque enclosed made payable to 'Hong Kong China Tourism Press'

☐ Credit card ☐ VISA ☐ MASTER ☐ AE

Cardholder's name: _____

Card number: _____

Signature: _____

Expiry date: _____ Total amount (book + postage): _____

Please return your completed form either by fax to (852) 2561-8196 or mail to Subscription Department, 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong.

For more information, please call us on tel. # (852) 2561-8001, Subscription Department.

Heli TOURS

直升觀光



HeliHongKong
港聯航空



(852) 2108 9899

www.helihongkong.com